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No. 2

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME.

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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 23

MAY 1916

Number 2

The House of Flowers

By Grace Margaret Gallaher

Author of "A Little Story in the Night," "A Free Spirit," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. W. HARTING

If you have ever read a more charming, more fresh and beautiful, more heart-stirring, story than this one, the editors would appreciate it if you would let them know its title and author.

IT stood where three roads crossed, its little peaked front door jumping right out into the footpath, its back porch peering over into the river. Whether the traveler's way led him up Mare's Hill or along the Nub Road or to the Desert, it served as a landmark; "Turn at the House of Flowers" was the sure direction. It might have answered to other names—there were its gray-stone walls, its towering windmill, its breakwater, to signify it; but always Pettipaug marked it by this charming characterization.

On either side of the house stretched a garden like the parti-colored wings of some vast butterfly; or, to change the figure, the house reached up crag-wise from out a foaming sea of white and pink and yellow. Hollyhocks and dahlias peeped over the wall; trumpet creeper bugled from the ridge of the barn; rose vines sprayed showers of bloom over doors and windows; honeysuckle wreathed the stones by the breakwater. In and out along the

paths tripped the small, modest blossoms—forget-me-nots, mignonettes, pansies, tea roses, even exotic mauve and green orchids.

When the last plummy chrysanthemums had been blown out to sea, and the garden cowered under the lashings of the winter rains, the house still claimed its name, for the whole front glowed with color where the farmer had built a glass extension for ranks of pots.

"All daughter's doin's," the farmer, Eliphalet Magna, would explain. "Wife ain't got any special gift with blooms, an' I don't know rose from rhubarb. But she cossets 'em up an' lures 'em on, same as they was babies. An' she's the sweetest posy in the whole garden herself."

No one—not even she herself—knew what that garden was to Lucretia Magna. To her it was as music to Beethoven or art to Raphael, what her Calvinist ancestor had once preached that religion should be—a belief, a pas-



"I been gardenin' ever since I was born, you might say, an' I can tell you 'bout ways I've found out."

sion, a life. For it she scorned delights and lived laborious days. Her earliest memory was of plucking out a weed so stout in its entrenchment that her fat baby legs flew high in the air with the tug of it. Her last night thought was a wonder whether rain or frost might damage her flowers; her first morning one, an eager longing to behold the changes wrought in the darkness. She was as "fey" for her garden as any soldier for the wars or sailor for the seas. Its iridescent, gauzy blossoms and lingering perfumes were her satisfying joys, her healing balms.

Eliphalet Magna and Martha Fran-

ces, his wife, prosperous folk, laughed, and let her snip and water, delve and dig, according to her pleasure. Eliphalet had even driven the first windmill in Pettipaug, so she would not have to lug water from the river.

Nurtured in that lovesome spot, fed upon dew and color and scent, Lucretia was "the sweetest posy in the garden," sturdy as a geranium, lovely as a damask rose, with a prick of spice in her like a clove pink.

This quiet, chill day of early spring, she was on her knees by a bed of daffodils, studying their golden trumpets intently, to discover the reason for their straggleness.

She had a little plaid

shawl crossed under her arms, but her head was bare, and the damp had curled up rings of hair around her innocent blossom face.

"I do believe you're pinin' away for a dish o' friendly chat," she told the daffodils, thrusting her fingers deep into the black loam.

Her mother—known as "Mar Frank"—came out to stand beside her, a placid-faced woman.

"The garden's lookin' uncommon thrifty, don't you say?"

Lucretia's little nose wrinkled drolly.

"Mother's said that every year since I was knee-high to a toad," she murmured to the daffodils.

"Ain't you tired, dear—up an' down so constant?"

As this, also, was a remark as old as the garden, Lucretia gave it no answer.

"Mother, a load o' furniture is drivin' right into the ol' Capwell house."

"I forgot to tell you 'Siah Capwell's rented it."

"Why, it leaks like a fish net, an' the floor's full o' holes."

"It ain't what I'd call a likely dwell-in'," her mother agreed, "but 'Siah 'lows he's made it weatherproof, an' I guess the folks that have took it won't make much o' a demand on him."

"Who is it?" "The Capwell place was the only house near the Magna farm."

"I can't call home the name. It's a man an' his sick father."

"How they deem they're goin' to live?"

"Fish, most probably, an' keep a garden. It's a poor, run-down fashion o' habitation. You can't look to have any but a tollux family in it."

Lucretia touched her finger to her cheek in a queer little gesture she had.

"Seems dreadful sort o' lonesome, movin' into that forlorn ol' house. I believe I'll give 'em some o' my daffies." She began to break long stalks of those heralds of spring.

"I'll make 'em a pie," her less romantic mother remarked. "I don't know as I'd give 'em all I had," for her daughter had filled her arms.

"Oh, I guess if you were just gettin' into a house 'Siah Capwell had mended, you'd want a whole mess o' spring to perk you up."

She ran along a cat path behind the house, a slim brown figure, with the quick o' the year in a golden heap in her arms.

The house was loud with strange men from the junction, setting up a few poor sticks of furniture. Lucretia laid the flowers on the mantelpiece, where their golden splendor would

gleam out at the newcomers. As she stepped out of the yard, she met a wagon driving in with a young man and an old one. She noticed only that the old man had silvery hair and carried crutches, as she nodded a neighborly greeting and hurried on.

At her own gate, a phaëton with a parasol top was just being hitched, and she heard her mother say, with ceremony:

"Won't you walk in an' set? Lucretia'll be back soon."

"That's Madam Goodnow's carriage."

With no thought of her earth-stained hands, she ran to greet the visitor.

"Oh, Madam Goodnow, you're right in time to see how beautiful the cottage maids you gave me have bloomed out!"

Madam Goodnow, the widow of Captain Judah Goodnow, one of Pettipaug's great sailors, who, as a boy, had fought the British in the *Constitution*, was the village *grande dame* and lived in "the big house" on the hill. She patted Lucretia's cheek with her mitted hand.

"A beautiful cottage maid, dear." She laughed at her own meaning.

Little dimples frisked in and out.

"Do look at the 'tulips!" Lucretia pleaded.

Madam Goodnow followed her about the garden, examining and praising as an expert, and exchanging deep speech on mulches and top dressings.

"Won't you rest you a while in the house?" Mar Frank urged, somewhat shaken that the great lady should be trotted about like a farmer.

"Indeed, thank you, I can't stay. I came to invite Lucretia to my house this evening for a little company. My grandson, Farnham, has come to live with me—as you have doubtless heard—and I wish him to become acquainted with the young people of the town as quickly as possible."

Lucretia gasped. She had planned to

have her father drive her over to the other side of the village, where Deacon Hosmer Sands was keeping a rare bulb for her. This was the last evening her father could spare out of plowing time.

"Thank you, Madam Goodnow," she stammered. "It's real good o' you. I know 'twill be a nice party. I——"

"Then come." The old lady laughed and pinched the girl's round little chin in her fingers. "Now, don't you sacrifice my grandson to any notion about your garden," crisply.

"Pretty as a flower and sweet as a peach," was her inner thought. "But is there any iron behind that pink? That's my question." She might well ask that. Lucretia's life so far had been serene and pleasant, a garden of sunny days and gentle showers.

"And I'll send you home in the carriage."

Here was condescension, for madam wrapped up her fat old horses in blankets at the first dewdrop.

With words of stately politeness to Mar Frank, the old lady rustled away to her carriage.

"Dear sakes, I'll have to begin gettin' ready soon, an' all that's to be done in this garden!" The girl delved into the earth in a stress of haste.

"Oh, Lute!" a strong voice hailed from the fence, and there was Billy Frame, jogging home from mill between two meal bags.

"Jump down, Billy. I got to transplant these roots before dark."

"Skipper won't stand. Can't you come to the fence to say 'afternoon' to an old mate?"

Lucretia rubbed her hand on her skirt and reached up to the young farmer. He took the slender hand, as work-hardened as his own, and held it in a big grip, his good, solid face reddening slowly under those candid, beautiful eyes.

"Want a bloom for your button-

hole?" She smiled tranquilly as she fastened a daffodil into his coat. "There!" with a good-by pat.

The hands holding hers trembled.

"Goin' to Madam Goodnow's party to-night?" he asked, a little hoarsely.

"As I view it, I got to," with a sigh.

"Isn't there some kind o' a queer tell about that grandson?"

"Farnham Goodnow? Why, no, I guess he's a right enough fellow. City raised, but that ain't his fault," said the countryman.

"Why ain't he ever visited his old grandparents?"

"Oh, you've heard that story. Judah Goodnow, this chap's dad an' ol' Cap'n Judah's only son, ran away with a girl that was help in a tavern to the city. Cap'n forgave him after a spell, but madam never could, nor she wouldn't let this chap step foot into her house till his mother was dead an' buried."

"Cruel!"

"That's madam. Now the mother's gone, she's summoned the boy home, an' she'll make of him like she did his father, till he disappoints her."

"Why, Billy Frame, how you know he won't turn out good?"

"I don't—that's a fact," laughed the big fellow. "Town's well pleased with him already. Says he's got a way with him like ol' cap'n, winnin' an' agreeable."

"I hope he'll take to us, too."

"Say, Lute, I'm a-comin' over for you with my colt."

"Now, don't you, Billy!" in anxious protest. "Maybe I got to be real kind o' late gettin' off."

"You goin' to be flaxin' round in that—garden?" He tripped himself up just in time on some fatal adjective.

Lucretia shook her bright head at him, her eyes full of mischievous reproof. A queer desperation twitched in the young farmer's face, as if he were about to dive from a tremendous

height, and feared, yet exulted, in the doing of it.

"Good day, Bill, good day. How's the folks?" Eliphalet's drawl sounded behind the girl.

"Pretty smart, thank you, Mr. Magna. I got to jog along. See you to-night, sure, Lute. Good day, sir." He touched up his horse and was off.

"Likely fellow," commented the farmer, "an' comes o' some o' the best stock in the State." He scanned his daughter with shrewdly twinkling eyes.

"He's just one of the nicest boys in the whole township," the girl agreed eagerly. "Father, you goin' to be able to drive me over to Deacon Hosmer's for that bulb I told you of? It's just the proper time to plant it."

"Why, I dunno but I might right now, if you can make out to be ready quick."

Lucretia was flying for the house before he had finished.

It was black night when Eliphalet and his daughter drove back into the barnyard, and a cold rain was sifting down through the little new leaves. Lucretia, wet and weary, glowed with triumph. Deacon Hosmer, noble gardener, but miserly neighbor, had given her a whole lapful of rare slips and bulbs.

"Why, Lucretia Ann Magna, however do you look to get you to that party? It's nigh bedtime now." Mar Frank shot a beam of light at them from the door.

"What party, dear?" in a daze.

"You're the beateneest!" sighed her mother. "Come right in an' get you some dry clothes—you're wet to a sop—an' eat a bite o' supper."

"It was at Madam Goodnow's! Oh, mother, I'm the forgetfulest girl in the county!" contritely. "But if you could have seen the deacon's Chinese lilies!"

In the night the rain ceased, the wind veered, and the sun shone out upon a

heaven-born morning. The air was tingling with a crisp, fresh warmth; the earth and the new grass breathed out good, clean scents; every leaf and bud seemed leaping into the sweetness and sunshine.

Lucretia, raking up the last of the winter's leaves for a bonfire, murmured:

"I'm a-goin' over to Lost Woods for whippoorwill's shoes. I believe, if I was to transplant 'em right now, they'd thrive."

She tied on her sunbonnet, took trowel and basket, and followed the hedgerows, where the hawthorn bloomed white. The enchantment of the day seeped into her blood; existence burned before her in a cloud of perfume, romance, adventure, fullness of life.

"You' in a dreadful collar pucker to be off," Mar Frank's voice assailed her.

Lucretia dutifully turned back.

"I've got a rhubarb pie I want you should carry down to those folks just moved in. I shouldn't wonder if they'd relish it."

"I guess they will—one o' your pies! What's their name, mother?"

"Gary, father says."

Lucretia knocked gently at the open door of the old Capwell house, then walked in. The kitchen was poor and bare, but clean as wax; a brown jug on the table held her daffodils; the old man of the white hair sat by the window.

"Mornin', little neighbor! Have a seat. I'm proper pleased to see you."

"Mother sent you a pie." She smiled at him in gay friendliness.

"Son, son, come see how good the world is!" The old man had a serene voice and a contented smile.

The other man stepped into the kitchen. Lucretia noticed only that he was young and tall and pale.

"Was it you brought all those pretty blooms?" he asked eagerly.

"They grew in my garden, an'——"

"They're my first bit of spring!"

"They're the bugles that blow spring in," she told him, and smiled with her sweet, rather dreamy, smile.

"We call it a good omen," the old man said.

"A good omen?"

"Why, Jim, here, is goin' to raise flowers for a livin'."

"Do folks *buy* flowers?"

"I hope so," cut in Jim. He had wise blue eyes and a steady smile that gave his pale, irregular face an interest. "I'm bankin' on that habit for my business."

"Pay ten cents apiece for a rose blossom!" cried the old man. There was a kind of boyish eagerness about him that made his son seem oddly mature beside him.

"I've heard things like that," as if they shared in common the realms of faërie. "But I'm dreadful afraid nobody could pay so much as one cent here in Pettipaug. We raise our own flowers, or we don't have 'em." She must not let him build on false foundations.

"Oh, he's got that planned out complete!" cried the old man.

"I'm goin' to sell 'em over to the city—send 'em in from the junction every mornin'," the young man explained. "I've got a friend that's a florist there, an' he'll take all I can send."

"You drive over every mornin'?" The junction was a good six miles off.

"Sail. Start at dawn, an' get 'em off on the first train."

The picture of a flower-laden boat sliding by the dew-drenched meadows in the pale rose and violet of dawn caught the girl's vision.

"Oh!" she cried. "Oh, how lovely to do!" Then, Eliphalet and Mar Frank rising within her, "But when the wind's contrary or dead ca'm?"

Jim laughed a wholesome laugh.

"White-ash breeze."

"You 'quainted with flowers?" She spoke of them as she might of citizens of Pettipaug.

"Some. Anyhow, I love 'em—always have."

Lucretia gave him a glance all golden friendship.

"Son an' me"—the old man took up the tale—"was country raised, up north farther, an' we had a garden o' posies, an' one o' garden truck, as sightly an' rugged as any you could see. Then his mother died"—he halted over the word even now, after all the years—"an' I was restless. Home warn't home any more. So we moved into the city an' took up work in a shop."

"Father's an expert machinist," his son told her proudly. "He worked for big wages till he hurt him."

"No better workman than what he is." They vied with each other in praises. "He could earn thumpin' wages this very day if he'd a mind to."

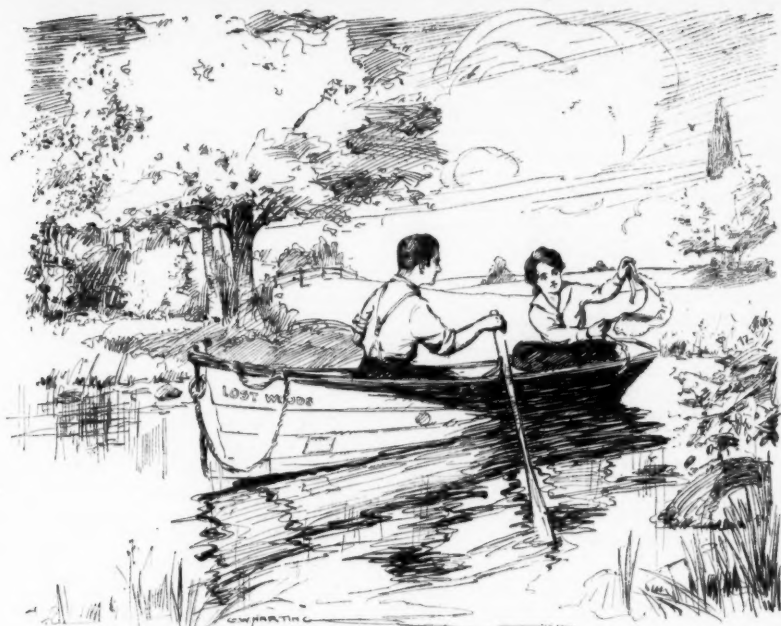
"I never was at home in the city. The soil's got into my blood, an' I can't ever run it out," the young man explained, his eyes on the soft, rose-colored face with the eager lips and eyes.

"'Twas me. I couldn't get out with my hurt leg, an' I was pinin' for air an' sun. Now I'm a-goin' to set out there under that ellum an' order the whole procession."

"Have you got seeds an' roots an' like that?"

"Nary one," answered the young man.

"You mustn't buy a single thing." Lucretia drew near to him with clasped hands, delighted to find some one anxious for the overwealth of her garden. "I got sights an' sights of everythin'—poppies an' sweet peas an' snap dragon an' roses an' all. You know how to plant 'em an' make 'em grow?"



"Here's the sail!" She flung her sunbonnet out by its string.

"Well"—Jim grinned—"mother had posy beds an' I helped her some, an' I love to grub round in the dirt better'n to eat, an' I got a book."

"A book!" Oh, the scorn! Lucretia was close to him, her hand on his arm. Some one to teach, a novice! "I been gardenin' ever since I was born, you might say, an' I can tell you 'bout ways I've found out."

"I'll come right over, soon as I can get the house hoed out, so we can find our way round."

Lucretia twitched her gardening bonnet back on her head; her eyes shone like stars out of its pink tunnel.

"Don't you delay you," she urged. "It's time to begin right now."

The old man caught her hand in his. "Say, little neighbor"—his old face glowed—"those blooms just *made home* for Jim an' me, last night."

The son looked straight at her, and, in spite of his pallor, lean features, and lantern jaw, something honest and warm was in his face.

Lucretia loitered along into the woods, listening to the sharply sweet twitter of birds, the piping of hylas in the marshes, and the tinkle of a sheep bell on the hills beyond.

"I'll go home by Lost Crik," she decided, when she had filled her basket with the roots of the pink-filmed whip-poorwill shoes.

The creek ran golden clear over pebbles and small rocks, until it tumbled downhill, bubbling with laughter, and fell splash into the river. A moss-grown footbridge spanned it. She paused with her foot on the log, for some one was coming toward the other end. Curiosity, not fear, drew her back behind a tree to reconnoiter.

Her heart gave a quick leap. The wayfarer was so extraordinarily handsome! She had never heard of a faun, else that name would have leaped to her at once. His tall, slender body flexed and rippled with the smooth grace of a deer's; his face was eager and wild and sweet all at once; and his eyes were dark pools, smitten by the sun. His garb was just country jeans worn with distinction.

She looked and looked, till, fearing that he might find her spying at him, she stepped out on the bridge sharply. The worn log sagged at the sudden impact and would have rolled her under into the cold creek, but, as her foot dipped, the stranger leaped upon a rock, caught her hands, and jerked her smartly up beside him. He held her on the slippery rock, with both arms close around her.

"I saved you a wetting, anyhow. I guess you wouldn't have drowned." He looked down into the amber shallows.

Lucretia had never heard a voice like his, musical as the sound of the brook.

"Oh, thank you very much," she murmured, in her confusion still clinging to him.

"All ashore that's goin' ashore!" He laughed and led her stone by stone. "Let's sit here." He pushed her gently down on a dry log. "Almighty sightly country round here. Father always said it was." He talked with a swing that made every speech significant. "What's the name of our forest?"

"Lost Woods."

"I'm lost, all right enough," he laughed. "Say, you rescue me"—his smile held a sweet audacity—"and get me back to my granny."

She found her voice.

"How can I, if you don't tell me her name?"

He laughed again.

"Mine's Farnham Goodnow."

"Oh, the party!" Had she missed a chance to see this radiant creature?

He laughed harder.

"Oh, you're the Miss Somebody they said would rather poke around in her garden! I took you for a lean old maid!"

Her cheeks were like the flowers in her basket.

"I meant to come. I forgot," humbly.

"This is ten times nicer. Come, tell me your name." He leaned toward her.

"Lucretia Magna. Folks call me 'Lute,' mostly." Her heart beat so fast the words could hardly come.

"Lute." He lingered musically over it. A bird thrilled on a bough; a sound like it. "Hark to him—L-u-uut-e!" It was indescribably sweet as he said it. "Lost Woods Crik." He took up the words. "Father used to explore it in an old boat."

"There's a boat now." She pointed to a battered skiff.

"Let's find the end of it! Quick!" He caught her hand, pulled her down the bank, and into the boat, all in a breath. "I'm no windjammer," he told her, as he fumbled for the oars, "but I reckon I can keep her afloat."

Lucretia, who would have gone to sea in a sieve with him, laughed happily, curling her feet up to keep them out of the water that swashed about the bottom of the skiff.

"Here's the sail!" She flung her sunbonnet out by its string.

All that ravishing morning they paddled and poled up Lost Creek, or waded over stones, hauling the skiff after them. The sun flickered a green-gold light through the mist of leaves; the birds called to one another; the wind kissed them with warm, light lips; faint scents and dim balms breathed from the woods. They talked and laughed and joked like children, or sat silent, each drinking of the other's beauty.

High noon floated them out on a meadow pied with the gold coats of cowslips. A boy was gathering the flowers into a ball.

"How far to Pettipaug?" Farnham asked him.

"Mile."

"Want to earn a dime, son?" Then, to the responsive grin: "Take this boat back to Lost Woods Bridge."

Still talking, talking out all their foolish young hearts, they crossed the meadow and came to the House of Flowers, pricked up out of its young greenery. Lucretia halted and looked at him with eyes of poignant regret.

"You turn off here. This is my home."

"This the garden you liked better'n me?" He bent low over her, his wild, soft eyes teasing and threatening and caressing. "Next time you come to my party, won't you?"

"Oh, yes," she breathed, all her tender, ardent soul in her eyes for him.

"Pretty soon—maybe to-morrow—I'm coming to see that wonderful garden and learn the name, age, and church connection of every flower there."

He flung her a gesture, half boyish awkwardness, half classic grace, and, leaping a fence in the foam of his vigor, swung off down the road.

The girl entered her garden slowly, like a sleepwalker, and, in a daze, brought water and planted the wild roots deep in a cool corner. Her fingers worked into the soil of old habit, but her mind was following the splendid stranger along the road to Pettipaug.

No moon glimmered in the velvet-black night, but myriads of big, kind stars lightened the dark with their softly burning lanterns, and a wing of dusk still flickered over the hilltops. An elf of a wind lurked in bushes and leaped snatchingly at feet and scam-

pered off behind rocks. All the hidden sweets of summer meadows—bayberry, sweet fern, wild rose—were tumbled about the hills by this wind.

Farnham and Lucretia wandered along the Rabbit's Road, across Stumpit Hill. They had not spoken in a long time, content just to be together. This was the end of a picnic in Fern Hollow. An overcrowded wagon had given them their excuse to walk home.

At the ridge of the hill, Farnham stopped.

"Lute, come on a minute. It's warm." He motioned her to a seat beside him.

"You can see the Light just as plain to-night." Suddenly she was afraid of silence.

"It's pretty clear." Farnham's voice was abstracted.

Lucretia could hear her heart racing like an engine.

"Lute, I got a place in the bank."

"Oh, Farn, I'm pleased to pieces!"

"I'm teller. Old Seaman's cashier, now. I'd have been better for that. He's kind o' lost-witted, I think, and old Pettibone's likely to go any day, and give a fellow a chance for the presidency."

"Madam tickled over it?"

"She don't know yet. You're the only one. Say, it's been awful work hanging round waiting for a start."

In the dark her eyes shone with soft sympathy.

"I know it has."

"And the old lady holding on to her cash box like the house was afire."

Lucretia drew away a little.

"Maybe madam isn't as well fixed as folks deem."

"She's got a pile coming to her when her brother down East dies. She's his only relation. Say, Lute, ain't you glad?"

"I'm happy as a queen."

He bent close over her, his rich, mag-

netic personality breathing his very life into her.

"This means we can be wedded some day!"

She trembled away from him with an instinct of shyness that linked her to all innocent girlhood. Then the tide of love that had flowed into every channel of her being that spring morning lifted her back into his arms.

"Oh, I love you above everybody and everything in this world!" he murmured, his lips against her pretty hair, her forehead, her lips. All sorts of whispered endearments, broken phrases, half-said words, slipped from his soul into hers, and she gave him back her whole heart, white, scarless. It was the betrothal of two children, Paul and Virginia upon the New England hills.

The sad-voiced old clock on Zion's Meetinghouse, which had read out the pages of so many lives, called ten. Lucretia raised her head from his shoulder.

"My country, Farn! You hear that?" She pulled him to his feet.

"Let's run!"

With a leap, he was off down the hill, her hand still in his, her feet flying along by his. Stones sprang from their path, bushes crackled, birds in the underbrush woke, twittering. The boy reached the low bars at the foot of the hill first, jumped them, caught her up to the top bar, and kissed her with hot, laughing lips.

"Now we're in Pettipaug, we got to behave." He crushed her against his panting breast.

A light burned in the kitchen, and, by the open window, Lucretia could see her mother, knitting and nodding.

"Mother's all tuckered out this tejus day," she thought, with compunction. "I've kept her up an awful late hour."

Yet she could not go in. Life throbbed and burned in her body. She wanted to swim out into the river, to

fly up to the stars. She ran down a path to where tall Madonna lilies ranked themselves against fairy-blue larkspur. Everything in the starlight was misty, dreamlike. She remembered that the lilies were too close packed; she meant to give them room. To-night was the time, in her hour of ecstasy, to serve the flowers she adored. Regardless of her clean print gown, she knelt into the earth and began to loosen the roots. Her fingers caressed the moist fibers as if they had been other dear fingers, and she talked a little language to them in a croon. The clock's voice, very far away, cried eleven.

"Mercy to me, child, I do believe you've gone clean crazy!" This was Mar Frank, sleepy and irritated. "Ramatin' round at midnight in the dirt in your new gown!"

"I'm so happy, dear, I had to." She wound her arm around her mother's waist, stepping wisely, even in her dreams, to hurt no little growing thing.

"Then I 'low you'll be up at dawn to-morrow to poke round with a trowel. That's how feelin' good takes you." But she kissed her little girl tenderly, thinking, "It's that Farn Goodnow. I like him well enough, but I wish it had been Willie Frame."

Who could tell of that summer in Lucretia's life? Such come only once in a thousand years, to the pure in heart who see God. A love like a new birth winged her feet, clarified her eyes, freshened her blood—"a new heaven and a new earth."

"My garden knows," she whispered to herself. "You're happy, too, aren't you?"

Never had it been so lovely. Hollyhocks, larkspur, bee balm, dahlias, Canterbury bells, foxglove, roses—to walk about the House of Flowers was to meet all the sweet of the year.

Beside this finished product of tall

shrubs and thick vines, to fill the eye with pleasure and satisfy the pride of workmanship, right at the edge of the wall was a baby garden, with all the delight and danger of experiment calling her. She worked in that garden of Jim Gary's more hours than in her own, and greeted each slim stalk of lily or heliotrope with cries of joy more exultant than ever given to her own serried ranks of bloom.

"You're a wonderful gardener," she would tell Jim, her eyes brilliant with excitement over some new bud timidly put forth.

"Oh, I'm a real Adam," Jim would twinkle back. "Say, you think I'm goin' to have enough geraniums to fill that order, or I got to borrow from you again?"

This summer was a long day's dream to the girl—saffron dawn, the watering pot in her hand; violet evening, the shears to cut; then Farn's step at the crotch of the road.

He could not see her at any other time, for bank affairs pressed. The old president had died; the old cashier trembled to his end; the young teller had all the load of responsibility to bear till new officials should be appointed.

So it was with a sense of holiday that, one honey-colored day of fall, Lucretia drove off with Farn for the afternoon.

"My stars, Farn, your colts are a handsome pair!" She looked along the glossy flanks of his new bays.

"Want to drive?" He put the reins into her hands, tougher to pull than his own. "Finest team this side of the city. What you think they stood me in?" His eyes had a dancing light that meant reckless adventure.

"Tell!"

"One thousand dollars!"



It was easy to steal across this and down the stout lattice at the back.

"Oh, Farn!" But she could not scold him. "Did madam give them to you?"

He looked at her queerly.

"That's the hitch on it. I hoped she would, but she wouldn't."

"But—how you pay for 'em?"

"They aren't paid for," gloomily.

"You see, I was sure gran would pull me out of this hole. She has before. So it hit me hard when she shut up tight."

Lucretia stared.

"You didn't *have* to buy 'em."

"But I tell you I have bought 'em," with fierceness.

"When you didn't have the money?"

"I *did* have it—at least—gran did."

"Farnham Goodnow, you went an' got you those horses when you couldn't pay for them! I never heard such a tell!"

It was their first wrangle. The boy sat with fingers tightly interlaced; the girl drove ahead with stiff reins. All she had ever seen, in that brief summer acquaintance, of his generosity and extravagance rushed in upon her. She moistened her lips.

"You'll have to pay for 'em some time."

He threw off his vexation like a garment.

"Oh, say, don't you fret your pretty little self about these chaps. They'll *have* to be paid for, so they *will be*—that's certain."

"But how?" anxiously.

"There's ways. I ain't without resources." He cast a quick glance along the leafy road and kissed her on her puckered forehead. "Old, anxious, worried grandame!" he teased. "But, say, Lute, I did think gran would have a freer hand to the only grandchild she's got. I did get a kind o' knock when I came up against that stone wall."

"Maybe she hasn't got the money, dear."

"Well, her brother in Boston has. He's richer'n a gold mine, and it's all to come to her soon."

Lucretia slid her hand into his.

"Dear," she coaxed prettily, "don't you make any more debts, will you?"

"They'll all be paid, pettie. The fellow that sold me this pair will wait all winter for his money. See that deer yonder, the first one I ever met on this road!"

The subject was dropped definitely, for, no sooner was the interest in the deer ended, than another took its place. By the side of the road an odd cavalcade had halted—a wagon with a broken wheel, a sleepy old horse, a boy, and a young woman. This last stepped forward to the edge of their carriage.

"Could you carry my bundles on a piece to Mr. Joel Ross', an' tell 'em we've broke down, but we're a-comin' on foot?"

She had a slow voice, with a queer little halt in it, and a face that was beautiful in a foreign fashion—big, blazing eyes, a dark, smooth color, and lips of deep coral. Lucretia looked and looked, half amazed that she was not girt about the head with a scarlet handkerchief and decked with crescent earrings. Her clothes, however, were common, shabby ones.

Farnham roused himself with a jerk. He, too, had stood speechless.

"Why, we'll take you, too. Room for three on this seat. Jump in!" He held out his hand.

With a laugh, the girl sprang in, light as thistledown, caught her bundles cleverly from the boy's hands, and called to him:

"You, Joe, push the wagon under the trees an' lead the horse home afoot."

The boy looked not well pleased at this; but, before he could object, the two eager colts were off.

"Now, this is proper clever in you," the stranger began, at once. "He says

it's as much as two mile to the house, an' I'm nobody to walk." She gave her odd little laugh again.

"You visitin' at Mr. Joel Ross'!" Lucretia asked politely.

"I'm his granddaughter, come to live with them. I just drove over from the junction. My, I should call it eighty miles!"

Lucretia, thinking how forlorn a home with deaf old Joel Ross and cross old Abigail Ross would be, said kindly:

"Their farm's in a real pleasant spot."

"I'll be glad to sight it, anyhow. I've come an awful ways."

She told them her adventures in a two days' journey, in her soft drawl, freshened with her musical laugh. She talked every minute, and Lucretia thought her beautiful and witty and queer, and Farnham laughed his delighted laugh at every droll remark.

"Here's your grandfather's."

It had seemed only five minutes. Lucretia pitied her, fronted with the broken-roofed, sagged-fenced place.

The girl expressed herself with frankness.

"Lord—a—mercy, what a hole!" Then she smiled on them warmly. "I wish I knew your names. Mine's Calista Ross—'Cal,' folks mostly call me."

Farnham told her their names as he helped her out.

"I'm beholden to you both. You've saved me an achin' back an' given me a good ride, in the bargain." For an instant her hand touched the girl's, then the man's; then she fled, like a spirit, up the path.

"Ain't she a strange, gypsy fashion o' girl?" Lucretia flung a last glance at her.

"Mighty handsome!"

"An' hadn't she a free way o' talkin'? 'Most like a man's."

"If you ask me, I'd say she told a pretty good story." He chuckled over her adventures. "I view it she don't give ground to any one."

After that their own affairs interested them again.

Lucretia drew her little shawl tight around her and stamped her feet on the hard ground.

"Don't you leave so much as one sprig uncovered," she admonished. "It's goin' to frost down in deep to-night."

Jim Gary nodded without looking up from the rosebush he was swathing in straw.

"Say, Lutie, I don't guess I told you the offer I've had?"

"No. Tell me, quick." She longed to be back home, for it was time for Farnham, but her voice was full of sweet interest.

"Why, they've advanced me capital to build a little greenhouse here, so I can keep on sendin' 'em flowers all winter."

"Oh, Jim! Oh!" She whirled around him like a leaf in the wind. "What good times you an' me'll have raisin' violets an' roses an' like that!"

The lank face of the gardener glowed in the dusk.

"Some," he admitted. "An' I look to make me a comfortable sum o' money off it, too."

"An' maybe we can get callas to grow, an' Madonna lilies, an' big-branchin' ferns that take up too much room for my window."

"Oh, we'll have sights o' blooms." He laughed. "You run on now, or you'll be froze."

Lucretia kindled the fire in the air-tight forerom stove, put on her light-blue cashmere that he liked, and went out to meet Farnham. He always pulled up at the crotch of the road, helped her in, and drove around the long way to the barn. To-night she

waited in the frosty silence, watching the moon swing up above Lyme Hills, and listening to every hoofbeat on the road. The old bell tolled out eight; then a long time passed. Farnham had never been as late as this. Shivering with cold and disappointment, she went slowly home, dumped the fire, blew out the light, and crept to bed.

She lay awake a while, wondering and guessing, the moon walking straight in to her on a broad white track.

"His grandmother's sick. She was ailin' last Sabbath," she told herself at last, and, tired from a long day in the garden, she turned on her side and slept.

She woke with a great start, trembling. Some one had called her name, beseechingly, distressfully. Farnham! She sat up in bed, cold from the open window, and toiled to adjust her mind to her surroundings. Slowly the strip of garden, flaming white in the moon rays, the low bedroom, the high-posted bed, all settled into their places. She curled down into the warm quilts.

"I dreamed a bad dream," she comforted herself.

Yet she could not remember any dream, and she still heard ringing in her brain that pitiful cry. She climbed out of bed into the aching cold and pattered to the window. By the pallid-faced clock, she could see that it was after one. She leaned out into the garden and scanned each shapeless mass that, to her, meant some plant. The whole world lay in a trance of stillness under the autumn moon; the river itself was as if chained in ice.

Lucretia drew a long, shuddering breath. Common sense told her to snuggle down into her warm bed at once, yet invisible hands pulled at her, inaudible voices called her. In a daze she bundled on her clothes, thrust her arms into a cloak, and let herself drop

from her window to the shed roof, just below.

It was easy to steal across this and down the stout lattice at the back. She had often climbed in and out so, when a child, for fun. Eliphalet and Mar Frank, asleep in the front of the house, could not hear. She had never been frightened in her whole life, and she was not afraid now; only she was out of herself, in a strange, possessed sort of way.

The garden was empty, soundless. Her swift sallies in and out of paths, behind beds, around walls, found nothing. Indeed, what had she thought to find? She turned back for the lattice and bed. Still the sense of some one there possessed her. She took one more twist toward the shed that housed her tools, and stopped like a dog at point.

On the frost carpet sparkled a brilliant object. In the palm of her hand, it showed for the gold-and-diamond-set seal that belonged always on Farnham's watch fob. He had worn it the night before, because, just as he had left her, he had taken out his watch and had told her that the ring of the seal was loose and he must have it tightened. He had not been at her house since.

She stood utterly still, moving her gaze all around the garden. Farnham was here, somewhere. The blood rushed to her head in a pounding race, making it whirl like a great wheel, then ran back into her heart till that felt swollen to bursting. She closed her hands very hard at each side of her body and walked straight to the tool house. She pulled at the door, which resisted her.

"Farn!" in an urgent whisper. "It's me—Lute!"

The door yielded suddenly. In the shadows Farnham crouched. She sat down on the tool bench beside him and reached out for his hand.

"I heard you call."

"Why, I just whispered your name!"

"But you wanted me."

The hand in hers jerked.

"I don't know!" Then, with a wretched sound, "I'm going to take the boat from Ayers' Point. They slow up there, and I can row out to them."

She did not ask why he could not board the boat at the Pettipaug wharf, but stroked his hand in silence, waiting, her heart beating heavily, as if it were under a stone.

"It's the bank!" he burst out, with a sudden, hoarse sound.

"Is somethin' wrong there?"

"Seven thousand dollars gone, and the directors know it. They've held a meeting over it to-night."

"Where's it gone to?" Her innocence could not grasp the thread.

"God knows!" he said wearily. "I haven't a hundred dollars in the world!"

"Did some one take it?"

"Some one! You—you—little fool! I took it! But they'll never get me now!"

Lucretia kept on stroking his hand mechanically, though all will was stunned in her. Farnham steal money! Her New England honor, crystal white, was scorched in the blast of this horror.

"Of course, I never meant to keep it. I just borrowed it, in a tight place. Gran can pay it up for me, now. I'm good for that amount, I guess, if they wouldn't kick up this hullabaloo." His tongue ran on like fire.

Still she could not speak.

"You turned against me, Lute?" He bent over her in the dusk, trying to read her face.

She moistened her lips, stuck dryly together.

"No."

He slid his arm around her shoulders.

"Oh, Lutie, darling girl, I had a noble start for life, and I've ruined it!" He dropped his head in the hollow of her shoulder and wept in a frenzy of grief.

Lucretia strained him close to her, comforting him as if he had been a little boy, with soft touches and low sounds of love. She need never rebuke this broken man.

After a long while, he quieted and raised a tear-blurred face.

"But I can begin again—out West, in the mines, or in South America. There're places——"

"Oh, Farn, dear, you ain't goin' to run away?"

He pushed her from him.

"Do you want me to go to jail?"

She blanched.

"Jail? Oh, not that!"

"If I stay here and let them try me, it's jail."

She dropped on her knees, her head in her hands, her fingers thrust into her ears. The word screeched itself hideously in her brain. She felt the man beside her cringe.

"Is that the boat at Deep Harbor?"

She reached her arms up close around him.

"Farn, darlin'—her voice was gentle and steady—"go back to them in the mornin', an' tell them you've sinned an' repented an' will pay back, an' they'll——"

"Send me to jail!"

"They won't! They can't!"

"Don't I know old Deacon Gillette and Cap'n Amos Winchester? Harder'n iron files!"

Her arms had drawn his head down to her breast.

"Then let them! You'll be honest so far, not skulkin' in foreign lands, afraid to hear the name o' America. Don't you see, dear, it's somethin' you can do toward bein' right with the world. You can't undo the past, but you can start again."

He strained his eyes into the moonlight.

"That the boat lights?"

"Listen, dear." She kept her voice quiet. "Folks will stand by you. Father



"They're wonderful thrifty, Jim," she said, in a voice like the thread of her old one.

an' mother an' the minister an'—everybody, if you own up manful. An' I'll be true to you, always." Her voice deepened to a mother's softness. "An' you'll live it down."

"I can't! Not jail!" His voice was sullen, his whole figure thickened down into resistance.

Then, in a voice as wild as his own, with clinging hands and gasping sobs, she begged him: "By your honesty—by the law of God—by my love!"

And all the while the lights grew steadily brighter.

He stumbled to the door, the girl still about his knees, and, grasping the door-frame, stared out into the keen, white night. The boat whistled for Pettipaug dock, made the landing, and began to unload her freight.

"I can do it yet," he murmured.

"Farn, my darlin'—" She could not go on. Her lips moved in an effort at prayer, but no words came. Her

brain, even, stood still. Only the great name of God beat in it ceaselessly.

The boy dropped on his knees beside her.

"I'll stay," he whispered, and leaned against her in a vast weariness.

Their arms tightly about each other, they watched the shape of the boat loom down on them, beat close to the wall, grow faint in the distance, and, at last, fade around the point. With a long sigh, they released their stressed hold and stood up.

"Good night, pretty," Farnham kissed her gently, too worn out for any passion.

"Good night, dear." She gave him back his kiss with sad tenderness.

Then he was gone across the shining fields, and she went creeping to the house, tired and cold. A rosebush, unsheltered in the eager air, waved across her path.

"My Braddock rose! How came I to forget it?"

Like a sleepwalker, she stole back to the shed, found a bundle of straw and string, wound the straw around the bush, and tied it. Then she climbed the lattice back to her room. She shivered till the bed shook; her very bones were chilled. She lay staring up at the moonbeam lying across her ceiling till it dimmed and went out and a streak of green-gray dawn took its place. Two sentences flared across the bar of light:

"Farnham is a thief!" in scarlet letters; then, in golden ones, "I love him with all my soul!"

The dully lighted room was crowded with Pettipaug folk, women as well as men. The judge—a schoolmate of the prisoner's grandfather—had finished his charge; the case rested; the jury were out. Every one knew that Farnham Goodnow had taken seven thousand dollars from the bank, for he had confessed it. His youth, his sweetness,

his shame, all pleaded for him. He looked just a beautiful boy who had fallen into a trap laid by Fate. His splendid, glowing eyes watched the floor; his cheeks were stained deep red.

Next to the prisoner, Lucretia Magna caught the pity of her townspeople. She was as white as a snowdrop, but she sat erect between her father and her mother, and her eyes burned with a clear flame for her lover. She had told every one in Pettipaug that if Farnham was acquitted, she was to marry him in a month; if he was convicted, as soon as he came out of prison.

"They're comin' in, daughtie," her father whispered to her.

Her mother clasped her hand hard under her shawl.

It was all over so quickly—the verdict of guilty, with a recommendation to mercy, the sentence of two years in prison, the emptying of the courtroom, and her own farewell to Farnham in his cell, before he was taken away on the night boat.

She had been steady as steel all the six weeks between his arrest and the trial, and she did not lose courage now. She smiled at Farnham, and told him:

"It's four months off for good conduct, dearie, an' I'll come to see you every month. An' the day you get home, we'll be wedded an' go out West an' start in all new."

"I never meant to steal it," the poor boy murmured, as he had a hundred times. "An' it's all paid back."

"Don't you dwell on that any more, dear. Just you plan for when you begin again."

"I'd be a wreck, only for you, my darlin' little pretty, my sweetie girl!"

Then had come tears and caresses and anguish from Farnham; and then, somehow, that was over, and she was riding home beside her mother, still and straight.

When the carryall rattled into the yard, she leaped over the wheel.

"I'm goin' to walk a piece down into the woods," she told her mother quietly.

"Now, daughtie, don't do that! Come in with mother." Mar Frank had caught a glimpse of her face, and feared.

That one sentence had taken the last of her will. She must be alone under the darkening pines, or she would screech herself mad. She ran along the path behind the Gary house, and, in her blind haste, stumbled into Jim. She recoiled and fell back against a tree, white, staring-eyed, spent.

Jim Gary's lean face twitched with pain, but he rubbed it out with a pass of his hand.

"Well, say, Lucretia, you're the one person in Pettipaug I most want to meet. I got a whackin' big order on the mail for carnations. I got to borrow your father's team to catch the night train, but how in thunder I'm goin' to pack the critters without you help me——"

Lucretia stared at him, motionless, speechless.

"If you could maybe pick, while father an' me get the boxes ready——" he suggested.

She followed him into his greenhouse, just finished and smelling of fresh paint and pine chips. The winter sun was setting in a flare of fire. All its passionate colors glittered among the green leaves. She drew off her best gloves, pinned up her good skirt, and began to cut the flowers, carefully sparing the buds. Her hands worked unseeingly, like the fingers of the blind, yet some whiff of spice from the gay blossoms touched a memory of other days, before the prison shadow had flung itself across her garden.

"They're wonderful thrifty, Jim," she said, in a voice like the thread of her old one.

Again that queer twitch all over his face, but he only said bluffly, out of a heap of boxes:

"Toler'ble peart. Say, you got time to bring my Roman hyacinths up from the cellar? They're sufferin' for transplantin'."

"Why, I guess I can."

She had felt that she could not live another minute unless she could fling herself down in the damp moss and weep all the tears of all the weeks, but now it seemed she could wait till she did this kindness for Jim.

She found the bulbs, their slender stalks pushed up into the air, and, with delicate touches, probed them out of their old beds and tucked them into new ones. As she worked, she saw, white against the sunset fires, the shining flowers that were to be, and her own that had bloomed in the past, and planned for richer earth for her next settings. And slowly the blackness of the prison shadow dimmed into pale mist.

Jim thrust his head in at the door.

"I'm off. Maybe to-morrow you can help me dig up an' stow away my chrysanthemum roots. You done yours yet?"

"Why, I don't know as I have. I'll do yours an' mine now. It ain't prudent to leave 'em a day longer." Her voice was touched with hope.

Jim smiled to himself, and drove off, and Lucretia knelt in her good skirt, digging up earthy roots and holding them against her clean waist till the far-off, contented stars shone in the skies.

"Father," Mar Frank fretted, "do look at that child! Out in the garden at this time o' night, an' in her meetin' clothes, too!"

"Don't you let yourself be put about by her garments, mother. There's balm in Gilead yet."

Stiff, aching, weary, Lucretia crept into bed that night. She meant to weep till she had no tears left, and so ease

her weighted heart, but when her head slipped into the hollow of the pillow, her eyes closed, and she slept like a tired child. And her dreams were of pink and spicy carnations and glimmering hyacinths.

It was smiling Jim Gary who lay awake with sad eyes, watching a brilliant star burn in the velvet patch beyond his window, and saying to himself:

"Poor little girl! Poor little girl! That mean fool o' a fellow!"

They passed somehow, those two years, and to Lucretia's bewilderment—who had looked ahead into them as into eternity—swiftly. She wrote once a week to Farnham, and every month went to see him, carrying such delicacies as the prison permitted, and keeping before him a serene control.

He, too, seemed to find time, if not swift, at least not so leaden of foot as he had dreaded. He was made bookkeeper in the prison office, and his sweetness and docility won him favors and friends. By one of life's ironies, his grandmother's brother died just after his trial, and left him a fortune.

In the other twenty-nine days of the month, when she could not see Farnham, Lucretia worked in the garden—her own or Jim's. All the long summer days, she weeded her beds, sprayed her plants, and gathered her arms full of flowers. She had enlarged her borders to contain brand-new beds of California poppies, sweet sultans, gold thread, and other blooms foreign to Pettipaug. Herbs, too, for the healing of the nations, she cherished. The highway simmered with the breath of sage, bee balm, sweet fern, lavender, and southernwood. Mar Frank was her almoner of great bouquets for Pettipaug sick or sad, but the largess of the day went to her neighbor, to help his business.

Jim was prospering lustily. His or-

ders from the city were steady and large, and Pettipaug, Deep Harbor, and the villages around now realized that they could always find flowers ready for them.

"What a comfort Jim's been to Lutie!" Mar Frank would say to Eliphalet, who would scrutinize her shrewdly over his spectacles and then answer noncommittally:

"Yes, yes. Jim's a good fellow."

Lucretia said it to his face.

"Oh, Jim, ain't it a miracle what a garden can do for you? I bury all my troubles in mine."

"Greatest friend a fellow can have."

Jim would smile at her, then sigh to himself at her thin cheeks and the blue shadows under her eyes.

"But, Jim, mine wouldn't be what it is to me if it wasn't for you sharin' all my hopes an' fears. Why, my garden's just twice as sweet to me because you help me in it."

Jim, lips set, would jerk up weeds as if he saw in them the genuine enemy of mankind.

Farnham's freedom was given him in late summer. The wedding was to follow in a week. Mar Frank had sewed for Lucretia a simple setting-out.

On a dead-hot night, starless and windless, Lucretia and her mother took the boat for their last visit to the prison. The languor of the night was upon them, and the shame of their business. They boarded the boat in silence, with just a glance at their one fellow passenger.

"That's old Ross' granddaughter. Wonder where she's to?" Mar Frank whispered.

Lucretia looked incuriously at the beautiful, foreign-faced girl, and shook her head.

They slept a little in the saloon, till the weary dawn brought them to the wharf, ate their breakfast, and waited, furtive and ashamed, for the prison to open to them.

"My soul, child, you look pinalin' as a potato sprout!" Mar Frank told her daughter, as they trudged in the dust up from the river.

The girl, tired, hot, and towlsed from her night in her clothes, quivered pathetically. She wanted so to bring sweetness and the freshness of free living to Farnham.

"My flowers ain't withered any." The great nosegay of mignonette and sweet peas comforted her.

From a side street glided Calista Ross, smiled and nodded at Lucretia.

"How-do-do? Awful tejus day, ain't it?" And she disappeared at a turning.

"She got folks in this town, likely?" Mar Frank questioned.

Again the girl shook her head. The prison loomed before her. She was steadying her courage, as she had done every month, to ask Farnham of the warden.

Two years behind walls had whitened the boy's cheeks, but could not bleach the sparkle in his eyes or chill the sun of his smile. He did not need heartening this time.

"Only four days, little dearie," he laughed to Lucretia. "They look longer than the whole two years to me."

She stroked his hand in her soft, maternal way.

"Poor boy, poor boy! They've been so long!"

"Say, pettie, I've been a big baby often when you were here, and you've had to work like a man to get me going again, but I'm all through that. We'll never say 'jail' to each other when I'm out, will we?"

"Oh, no, no!"

"And we'll make a big fight of it out there, and win; won't we?"

"Yes, dear."

"I'm full to the brim of hope and trust in myself, Lute. I've got the money now. I shan't ever feel that grind, and I'll have a glorious chance

where capital's needed. Oh, this'll all be an ugly dream!"

She looked at him in a deep amaze. The spirit and hope of him, as if the scars of this fiery furnace could ever be blurred out! But she would not daunt him, smiling up at him with ineffable love.

"You've been a little solid brick of gold, Lutie, darling. I'm not worthy of you. No man's worthy of you." His bright eyes were troubled; his face sagged into anxious lines.

This was not the place for soul to touch soul. Lucretia smiled in as common sense a way as she could find.

"Let's plan. You'll be on the down boat Monday night. Father an' I'll meet you an' take you home. The next day you'll go on down to the city. Then, in a week, you'll be back for— for——"

"Our wedding!" He caught up the word her blushes dropped.

Lucretia looked at him, speechless. How she had once dreamed over that word! Now how saddened all her thought of it!

They talked a few minutes more, then parted with the quick, hidden good-by of prisons. Just at the turn of the corridor, she looked back and caught his eye, bright, yet sorrowful.

"There she comes!" Eliphalet drew a breath of relief; the boat was an hour over her landing time, and he two hours over his bedtime. "Now, daughter, you hold the team an' I'll fetch Farnham."

"No!" She was out and off before he could speak. She must be the first to welcome him back into life.

She stepped out on the wharf. No one should think her ashamed of Farn. The night was black, the wharf lights dim. She could not tell her fellow townsmen as they hurried forward. One gleam of light caught a group— Old Man Ross and his granddaughter,



"I'm full to the brim of hope and trust in myself, Lute. Oh, this'll all be an ugly dream!"

Calista. The girl went aboard, and was lost in the shadows. People landed from the boat—all women; the roustabouts began to unload the freight. Lucretia ran to the stringpiece. Was he waiting till every one had gone?

The last piece of freight was on; the captain called, "All ashore!" Still Lucretia stood over the river, holding by a stanchion.

"Move back, miss!" a deck hand

warned. "The hawser'll run too close to you."

She drew back into the darkness and watched the boat churn out of dock and thud off downriver. Her eyes followed the lights till they were specks of color. Then she walked back to her father.

"He didn't come. I guess I'll get a letter to-morrow."

She felt sickish, but she would not

let herself fear. There had been a day's hitch about his papers; that was all.

No letter came the next day, no Farnham that night. For a week Lucretia waited and looked and listened. Then it was the eve of her wedding. She had made all her preparations as if she were a happy bride. Her cake was baked, her dress laid out on the forechamber bed, the few relatives bidden. In the dusk she waited for him, because he might drive up from the junction.

The night was hot, and so still that the clank of a windlass, as a schooner downstream weighed anchor, sounded as if at the foot of the yard. The House of Flowers reared itself against the pallor of evening; all its rank upon rank of blossoms showed as blurs and masses. Ghostlike Luna moths hovered about in search of rare delights. The air was sweet with rose, lily, heliotrope, musk, all the riches of the garden poured out into the night.

Lucretia flitted about the crossroads, light as a moth herself. The week of waiting had been like files rasping on raw flesh. Her nerves jumped in their channels, her skin pricked, her brain quivered. She held herself quiet by an agony of effort. Madam Goodnow would have seen "the iron" now.

She heard no sound, saw no shadow, yet Farnham was beside her.

"Lute!" he whispered, and had her in his arms.

Her hands clasped behind his neck, her face in his breast, she wept like a little child, until the dread of the days was all washed clean away.

"Oh, Farn! Dear, dear Farn!" she whispered at last, and raised her face for his kiss.

The boy's face was sick and haggard in the dusk.

"God Almighty, Lute!" he whispered, and staggered free of her.

"What's it? You sick, dearie?" She would have supported him in her arms.

"She came to see me every month. She followed me aboard the boat that night. Then her grandfather hunted me up and said I'd taken away her good name." He said it tonelessly, like a man in his sleep.

Lucretia stared and stared.

"He says I *got* to wed her. *She* says I *got* to."

Still she stared.

"You tell me what I ought to do."

The girl found voice at last.

"Farnham, you work out slow what it is. I can't sense it."

"Calista Ross is a-waiting in the city for me to wed her."

"You prize her more'n you do me?"

"I don't know! Oh, I don't know! She's got a way with her would wile the birds. When I'm with her, I can't resist her. When I'm away, I think sometimes I hate her."

They stood apart, talking as quietly as if it were not the very stuff of which life is made of which they treated. Suddenly the girl twitched.

"You haven't—haven't—harmed her?"

His dullness broke.

"No!"

"Then—then why do you want to— Oh, Farnham, *do* you prize her most?" Her voice wailed high in the stillness.

"No! No! I can't make it straight to myself. When I'm with her, I don't think of any one—not even you. Then, when I'm away from her, I—I guess I hate her. But she's waiting for me in the city."

"An' I'm waitin' for you here."

Silence, heavy, tragical, fell between them. They looked into each other's eyes unseeing.

"You're the sweetest, noblest girl a man ever could wed!" he cried out. "I'm a cur!"

"Do you prize her more'n me?" The same low, steady question.

"She ain't worthy to tie your shoe!"

"Will you be happier with her?"
"Will it break your poor little heart if I go?"

Lucretia's eyes filled with tears of pity, not for herself, but for the boy whose life she was a second time to see wrecked. Should she hold him for himself, that in her love he might grow into some shape of the man he might be? Could she? After all, Calista was not a wicked girl. Desire toward Farnham made her cruel to Lucretia, unscrupulous in her means, but to him she would always be loyal; that Lucretia believed. Who would not adore Farnham, glowing, sparkling, splendid figure of youth and ardor? The picture of him, in that green sunshine of early spring, under the white birches, glimmered before the girl, and her heart was as if squeezed in an iron hand.

What was the happy life for Farn? That was what it came down to. She didn't count any more—never had counted.

"Dear, listen!" Her voice sounded like another woman's to her, some old, settled woman, with youth far behind. "You do just like you feel to. If it's a-goin' to be the way you want it to wed me, you know—know—how—how—I—love you. Why, dear, I'd die for you, an' be glad to." Her voice halted a breath. "But if it's to wed Calista—you go right back to her to-night. Don't you think of her, don't you think of me. You have it the way you *want* it; that'll be the *right o' it*."

In the silence and the darkness, he pondered, bemused, perhaps, with the coil called life. He took a step toward the girl and held out his hands. She saw his face, gave him both hands, and her eyes held his eyes, not questioning, not imploring, only waiting.

"You're a thousand times too good for me! I'm a hound! I ought to be kicked!" He kissed her with agony, and she kissed him back. "Darling,

sweetheart! You deserve some one like yourself!"

His arms crushed her—loosened. He was gone, rushing away down the road. Lucretia stooped to pick up the flower she had dropped when he came; it was fresh and dewy still. She had no feeling of any sort in brain or heart; only her body ached in every bone, as if it had been beaten.

As she opened the gate, her father thudded by her.

"Jim's hurt," he called over his shoulder.

She did not care a straw about Jim, but she followed her father to the other house. Some one with hanging hands and blood-splashed face lay on the kitchen lounge. Her mother and Old Man Gary bent above it. She went to her mother's side.

"It's more blood than anythin'," as if she had been a surgeon. "Father, you hook up an' go for doctor. We'll look out for him. How he do it?" she asked the old man, who limped piteously about for water and linen.

"The new colt kicked him in the stall. He crawled in here someways. Oh, Jimmy, don't die an' leave me! Don't die!"

"He ain't a-goin' to die, Mr. Gary," Mar Frank soothed him. "His right arm's broke, an' his head's cut considerable, but he ain't in a fatal condition. I'm quite some of a nurse, an' I know."

The old man sank down in his wheeled chair.

"An' he's just added to his green-houses an' launched out into big business, an' borrowed the money, an' 'twill all fall through while he's laid by!" The slow, terrible tears of old age crept down his cheeks.

Lucretia went to him and took his hand between hers. To-night she could not bear to see any one suffer.

"I'll carry on the business for him, Mr. Gary." She smiled sweetly down

into his poor old face. "I'm a better gardener than what he is, you know that. An' I'd just love to work at it for him."

He wondered at her through his tears.

"You can't. You goin' to be wed to-morrow."

She still smiled at him.

"Oh, no, I ain't. Not to-morrow, nor any day. I ain't never goin' to be wedded."

The man on the lounge stirred at her voice, roused, and looked at her wildly.

"Why ain't you goin' to be wed?" he cried hoarsely.

"Farnham don't prize me any more." She said it indifferently.

"What you goin' to do, then?" his voice grown wilder.

She laid a quiet hand on his breast, pressing him down.

"Take care o' you, Jim, an' grow flowers for you."

The garden was now indeed "a love-some spot," all color and sweetness. The roses had come—Jacks, Maréchal Niel, tea, Braddock, Tudor, moss, all those loved of old time and others strange to Pettipaug; honeysuckle, too, hanging high on porch and trellis; and lovely iris, Egyptian and Japanese; the darling forget-me-nots, like a patch of sky flung across the flower beds; and pansies, velvet shadows and rich spots of light.

Lucretia rose slowly from her knees, flexed her arms, and looked about her.

"Oh, ain't it beautiful?" At first she rested herself with the whole aspect of loveliness about her; then her eyes dwelt fondly on each separate bed. "They've been growin' an' bloomin' all the time, an' me too busy weedin' 'em to give 'em so much as a glance!"

She stepped happily in and out among the blossoms, touching this one

with her fingers, that one with her lips. Once she stooped to pull a weed, then jerked back.

"No, I won't! I'll just *love* 'em now."

She sat down on the tool-house steps and leaned her head against the door, her eyes closed, her spirit bathing itself in the sun and air.

"My garden ain't ever been so prosperous, not since I was born."

Again she looked, and now it was down toward her neighbor's house. No fence separated them, as once; rose vines, hollyhock stalks, syringa bushes ran along, unhindered, to Jim Gary's doorstep.

"It's out o' belief what him an' me have done with that poor, worked-out land in just six years!"

The other garden might have burgeoned and blossomed as long as hers, so teeming with flowers it was.

"Six years!" The words caught her. "I feel like it was sixty, sometimes. An' then, again, it ain't but a few weeks. I can see Farn, an' hear him, like he stood there now, but there come days I can't make it seem true I ever spoke with such a man." She talked to herself in a low murmur, one of the changes of the six years.

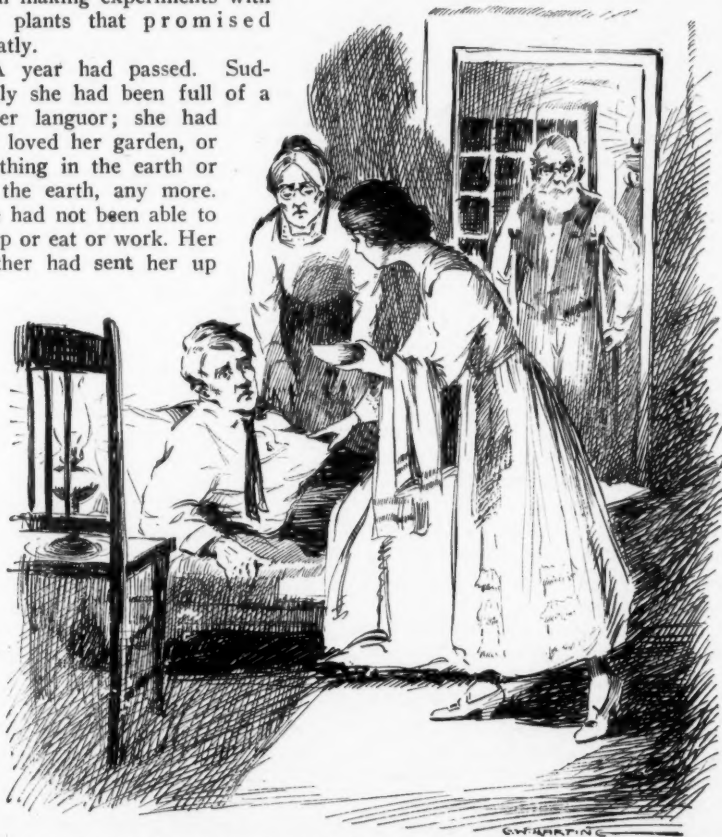
"I don't know when I've let myself dwell on him this way. I didn't use to dare to." A kind of wonder woke in her voice, as if, probing a deep wound, she was amazed to find it healed. "Some way the air seems full o' him to-day. It ain't the flowers. He never prized 'em. I did for him, an' thought he did, too." She smiled a sad, wise smile. That, too, the years had taught her.

The river, blue flecked with gold, the sky gleaming with white clouds, the hills all misty green, sang of June, the sweetest season of New England's year. Lucretia's eyes traveled dreamily among its beauties, while she still murmured to herself.

That first night, when Farnham had left her, she had helped her mother watch with Jim Gary; the next day, and for weeks afterward, she had worked in Jim's garden and carried his flowers to the junction, while he had slowly crawled back to life. She had never let herself think of Farnham at all, had just slaved all day and slept dreamlessly, drugged with weariness. Some day she might grieve; then she had not dared to. When Jim was well again, she had still delved on, for she had been making experiments with her plants that promised greatly.

A year had passed. Suddenly she had been full of a queer languor; she had not loved her garden, or anything in the earth or on the earth, any more. She had not been able to sleep or eat or work. Her mother had sent her up

into a far northern country, to her own people. Now it had seemed to the girl that she could weep for her lost lover without the horror of madness gripping her. But she had not wanted to weep! Out on the bare hills, with their dark trees and somber boulders, she had gazed off across the valleys, miles away, and thought of life with its ironies and sweetnesss, its disappointments and its fruition, as if her own years had been all behind her. Tranquillity and gravity had flowed over her, but not sorrow.



The man on the lounge roused, and looked at her wildly. "Why ain't you goin' to be wed?" he cried hoarsely.

"You needn't to be happy to keep on livin'," had blazed before her one day, in a vast amaze, out alone on the solemn hills. Then, another day, "I don't need Farnham to make me happy."

When she had decided this, she had packed her trunk for Pettipaug.

Yet that second year she had been wounded constantly by fierce thrusts of pain, and many a night had sunk at last to sleep with wet cheeks.

After that she had been just as before, working hard among her flowers, singing sometimes, smiling often. Only, in the depths of her heart, she hid a terror, the most poignant of all fears—of life itself, life that had so betrayed her.

Jim Gary came down the path and stood stock-still at the sight of Lucretia spinning cobwebs in the sun, in the middle of the afternoon. Jim was bigger and brawnier and browner than of old, and as queerly ugly.

"Lute," in his leisurely drawl, "I guess maybe you'd want to see this."

She took the county paper from him. In it was a clipping from a Western paper, a rambling, grandiloquent tale of a rescue from drowning in a mountain stream of a girl and a little boy—at the peril of his own life and with great physical exhaustion—by a passing stranger. The rescuer was "that splendid citizen and prosperous ranchman, Farnham Goodnow."

Lucretia read it from beginning to end, then all through again.

"Farn was always brave." She had never spoken his name to Jim.

The man looked at her with his steady, sharp eyes.

"You cared a mighty much about that fellow, Lute?" It was his first word to her.

"Cared!" She flung her hands up high above her head, dropped her face in her lap, and wept agonizingly.

Jim stepped in front of her, to hide her.

"Don't, dear; don't!" His voice shook, his face twisted. "I ought to be hung!"

"Oh, it's not you! It's—— Oh, I can't say it out! Let me be!" She tried to push past him.

He caught her hand and, holding it, kept pace with her flight out of the garden, down into the woods. She flung herself down on a bed of moss, soft as feathers, and wept and sobbed and beat the ground with her clenched fists, and cried out broken words of agony.

And all the time Jim stood by with his face lean with suffering.

"I didn't know you cared like *that* still." He dragged the words from his dry throat.

Lucretia raised her face, drained of all color and shrunken smaller than its wont.

"I don't," in a tired whisper. "I just been holdin' in all these years, an' sudden I couldn't hold in any more."

He seated himself beside her.

"He wasn't worth any girl like you should set such store by him."

"No."

"He wouldn't ever have made your happiness."

"No."

"An' you'd be not near so well off for a good, peaceable life if you'd 'a' wed him."

"No."

He took her hand in both his.

"But all that don't make one rye straw's difference in your feelin' now?"

"No."

She leaned her head against his arm, and they sat in quietness, while the shadows grew long in the wood. That was the worth of Jim; he always understood without words.

At last she rose with a sigh like a sob.

"I guess that can't ever happen again,

Jim. It's a kind o' a stone rolled onto a grave. Now let's go gather those new roses before the sun's all gone."

They talked of flowers only, all the way home; yet, to herself, Lucretia kept whispering:

"I can't get him out o' my head. It's as if somethin' were goin' to—happen."

June wasted and July, and August was upon Pettipaug, a wonderful month after weeks of rain; the grass as green as springtime, the flowers all glowing with color. Lucretia was gathering long-stemmed monthly roses to lay in a wide basket. Another basket was filled with brimming over with sweet peas of every delicate shade.

"Wonderful pretty posies," a soft voice said behind her.

She smiled without turning her head.

"I'm goin' to carry 'em to a weddin', Mr. Gary. One o' my mates, Lucy Johnson, is to be wedded to-morrow, an' they're my present to her."

The old man looked cautiously over his shoulder.

"Heard 'bout Jim's luck?"

"Tell me." She went on snipping, lending only half attention. She knew the father's adoration of old.

"The boss is a-goin' to give up his business. He's offered it to Jim, lock, stock, an' barrel, nothin' down, an' half the profits. He's old, Andrew is, an' he can see how 'tis my boy's made the most o' his success these last years."

"Will Jim move into the city?" Each word came slowly.

"Sure."

"An' his garden, here?"

"Oh, he'll put a man onto this he can trust."

"But how'll you ever make out, all hived up indoors?" She felt as if she were building up straw defenses against the tide of calamity.

"Oh, I guess there's places handy

that'll suit me—suburbs." He said the word proudly.

Lucretia gathered all her flowers into her baskets.

"Jim's prospered here," she told him vaguely.

After the flowers had been carried into the village, some of the day still lingered. She could not settle back to the round of weeding and watering. Her feet strayed away down the leafy trail. Lost Woods! She had not been in them since Farnham had left. She sat down on the log by the bridge, looked through the glade of young birches, and waited. She saw him coming, radiant, vivid, throbbing with youth and fire, the gold light flooding him.

It might be now. Only then it had been morning and spring; now it was afternoon and late summer. She closed her eyes to shut out the empty path. Did she love him? She could not tell. Only the loneliness and the silence hurt her.

"Lutie!" Her name like a sighing of the trees.

She pressed her eyelids close.

"Lute, Lute!" Only one voice could sound so like a bird's call.

She could not move. If it were a dream! If it were true! For Farnham was springing along the path toward her. His warm, strong grasp held her hand.

"Don't tremble so, darling! It's me, Farn—real and alive."

Still she stared, with white cheeks and great eyes.

"Just where we met first, dear, eight years ago." His voice was as thrilling as of old, his smile as sweet; he looked the lover of that day.

"What you come back for, Farn?" It seemed as if some one else said it.

"You!"

"Where's——"

"Dead, poor girl, two years ago. Listen, Lute, it wasn't right, and it wasn't

happiness. But she was a good wife to me, and I did my very best for her. She never guessed she didn't give me all I needed. She's gone. We'll let her rest."

"Oh, yes." She drew away from him where he sat on the log.

"It wasn't her fault most—it was mine. I've suffered for it, God knows!" For an instant his beauty clouded. Then brightly, "We'll let that rest, too."

Again the girl shrank into herself.

"Yes."

"I've come back to you, darling. You were always my girl. Will you forgive it all and take me back?" His voice caressed, moved, and besought. "I've prospered. I got a big ranch in the West, and I've made a good place for myself in men's respect, too. They don't know—and—and I've done well by them."

"I read how you saved the girl's an' the boy's lives." She could speak now.

"That! There're other things, too. You ask them, out in my country, if I ain't square and straight and the kind of fellow they want among them."

"Oh, Farn, I believe it! I trust you!"

"I queered my deal at the beginning, but I didn't wreck my game. I've started all over again." Suddenly he flung his arms around her, holding her in a hot clasp. "Darling, sweetie, you promised me once. You loved me then. You ain't the kind that changes. You love me now!"

She lay still against his breast. Her heart beat heavily. Her breath throbbed. But she knew neither joy nor sorrow, love nor revulsion; only a dreadful fear that somehow he would make her say "yes."

"Pettie, you ain't hard to me, nor unforgiving?"

"No, Farn. I forgave you long ago."

"Then, darling——" His lips were against hers.

With a wild twist she was out of his arms and on her feet, facing him.

"I did prize Farnham Goodnow above everythin' on earth, an' I prize the memory of him still. But you ain't him. He died in prison, years ago. No, no, that ain't it! He never *was* born—not like I thought he was. You see, you're another man from the one I promised."

"I'm not!" violently.

"I haven't any hard feelin's to you, dear. I wish you all the happiness in this world. But I can't take you back. I ain't ever *known* you!"

"Know me now, then! Oh, pettie, my little girl!"

He caught her hands again and explored her with every word of endearment, in every accent of love, in a passion of prayer. She stood quivering, cold, repeating, with steadfast sadness:

"I can't, Farn. I can't."

Suddenly the man shook her.

"You've taken up with another man!"

"No, never!"

"Ain't there anybody you love on this earth?"

"Mother an' father."

"No one else?"

"My flowers." She laughed a sorrowful little laugh.

His eyes held hers in the growing dusk.

"Will you be happier wedded to your flowers than to me?"

They looked long and steadily into each other's eyes. Some strange chill flowed from her to him. He, too, trembled and dropped her hands.

"I came all the way East to get you, Lute," he said drearily. "Don't you want to set by me again?"

"Oh, I do want to!" Her voice rose tragically. "I do, but I can't! I can't!"

He leaned toward her, and again they kissed, as on that sorrowful night years ago, solemnly, without passion.

"Good-by, dear," she said tenderly.
"I hope you'll find some one."

He went without a word.

In the shadowy garden, Lucretia wandered among her flowers, telling each one by its scent, for the colors were blurred into gray now. The thin young moon swung up into the sky and sprayed the garden with a pale glimmer. She drew a great damask rose against her cheek. How still the river and the road were! How still the whole world—how empty and lonely! Farnham was a dream of a midsummer night; Jim was going beyond her ken; only the flowers were left. She had spent her life for them; they would be true. She drew the rose to her lips.

"You here?" It was Jim's ungainly length in the moon path. She held the rose out to him silently.

"Farnham saw me a while ago," he told her quietly. "I told him I saw you go Lost Woods way. He sought me out when he came back."

She bent to gather another blossom. A great moth flew close to her head.

"Couldn't you forgive him, Lute?"

"Yes, long ago."

"What you give him up for?"

She said, strangely, "My flowers."

"Don't you hold him dear any more?"

"I never did. There never was a Farnham Goodnow like I plotted him out. I—I—loved—a dream, Jim."

"I know." His voice was very tender. "An' you woke up suddenly——"

"No, gradual—through six years. But I'm broad awake now."

"An' you got your flowers left!"

She moved deeper into the shadows.

"Lute, where are you?" He reached in among the vines. "You take me with the flowers?"

"You're goin' away. Your father said so."

"No, I ain't—not if you're wishful to stay. I can run things from here. I prize the flowers, too. I ain't much, but I'm just what I seem."

"Don't I know—eight years workin' every day, side by side?" her voice whispered behind the vines.

"I won't pester you, poor little pretty! You've been pulley-hauled through most everythin'. But you just tell me you prize me next after your blossoms. I've always longed for you from the first hour I set eyes on you, but I never dared to think I had a chance."

In a long silence he waited. Strange, life-quickenened emotion beat upon the girl's weary heart, stirred the blood quelled by the years to leaping fire. The bushes bent to a swift rush. She was close to him, holding his hand.

"I do love my flowers—they haven't ever hurt me. But—— Why, Jim, I love you best!"

And the House of Flowers, tall and spectral in its sea of blooms, looked down on them with a kind of silent blessing.



WAITING

LOVE hath no quiet in his heart,
No peace within his hand.
May Love not see me, where apart
To catch his eye I stand!

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.



ON OPENING GATES

By William H. Hamby

THE train whistled to a stop at a little station in the hills. The man in the chair beside me leaned over and looked out of the car window, as if glad to see the town again. "See that little store across there on the corner?" he said. I did. Also, I saw he wanted to tell a story, and gave a questioning intimation that the track was clear.

"I sell flour," he remarked, as the train pulled out, "and I used to sell to the old man who keeps that store. There was a young woman clerking for him, and I soon noticed that it was she who knew all about the stock, and where everything was, and what they needed. The store, too, was the cleanest, and in the best order, of any store in town.

"The old storekeeper told me about her. She grew up back in the hills, but was ambitious. Her father refused to send her to school. It nearly broke her heart, but she finally gave it all up and settled down to live in a cabin in the hills, like the rest. She married a worthless young man in the neighborhood, who drank and loafed—and finally stole; then ran off and left her with two children and no means of support. She came to town and got this job in the store at seven dollars a week.

"Well"—the flour salesman paused a moment—"the next time I came, she was gone. The store was run down—everything out of place. Nobody knew what they had or what they wanted.

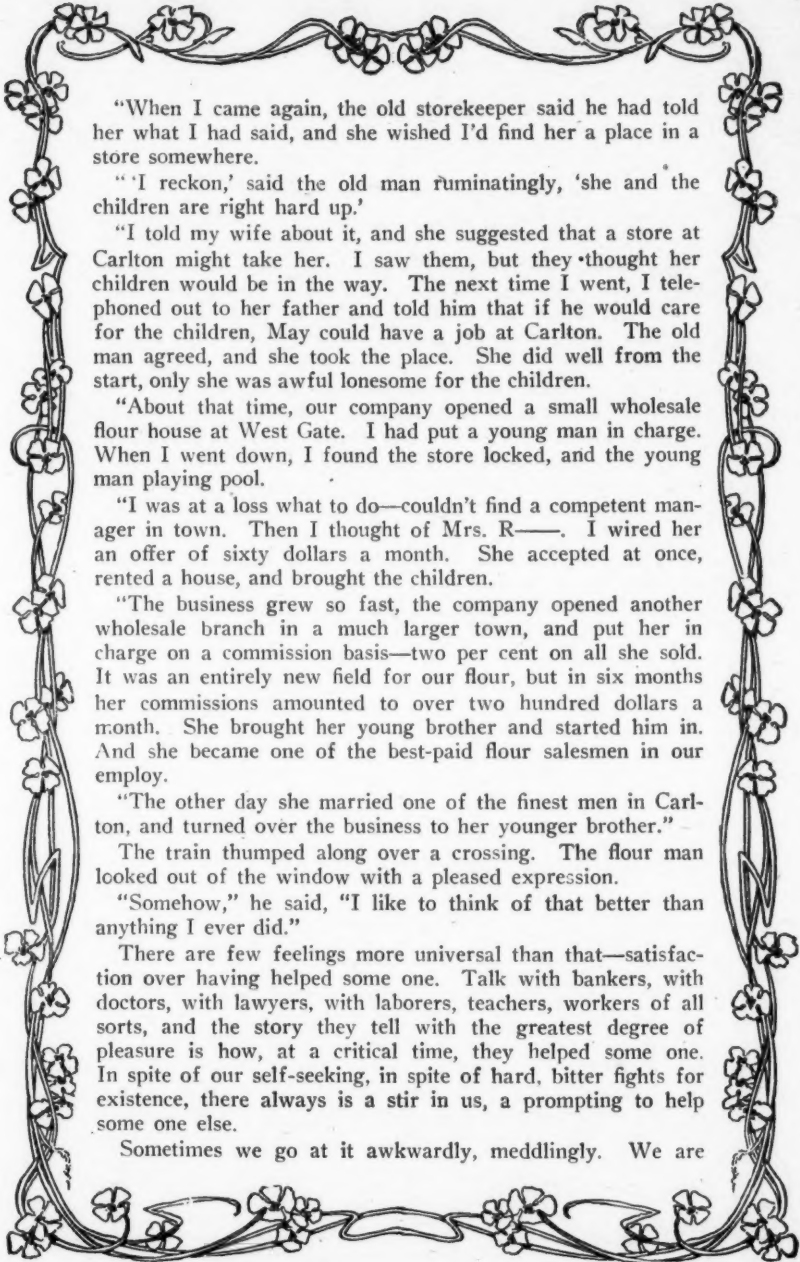
"Where is your clerk?" I asked.

"I had to let her go," said the old storekeeper, stroking his whiskers. "She's a mighty good clerk, but I needed a man to help load wagons and sweep out the store, and I couldn't keep two clerks."

"Yes," I said, "but you're losing trade—and your store's in bad shape."

"Well—I had to have a man—and I couldn't keep two," he said doggedly.

"Of course, it was none of my affair, but I told the old man he was certainly making a great mistake—that she was one of the best clerks I had ever seen.

A decorative border of stylized flowers and vines surrounds the text.

"When I came again, the old storekeeper said he had told her what I had said, and she wished I'd find her a place in a store somewhere.

"'I reckon,' said the old man ruminatingly, 'she and the children are right hard up.'

"I told my wife about it, and she suggested that a store at Carlton might take her. I saw them, but they thought her children would be in the way. The next time I went, I telephoned out to her father and told him that if he would care for the children, May could have a job at Carlton. The old man agreed, and she took the place. She did well from the start, only she was awful lonesome for the children.

"About that time, our company opened a small wholesale flour house at West Gate. I had put a young man in charge. When I went down, I found the store locked, and the young man playing pool.

"I was at a loss what to do—couldn't find a competent manager in town. Then I thought of Mrs. R—. I wired her an offer of sixty dollars a month. She accepted at once, rented a house, and brought the children.

"The business grew so fast, the company opened another wholesale branch in a much larger town, and put her in charge on a commission basis—two per cent on all she sold. It was an entirely new field for our flour, but in six months her commissions amounted to over two hundred dollars a month. She brought her young brother and started him in. And she became one of the best-paid flour salesmen in our employ.

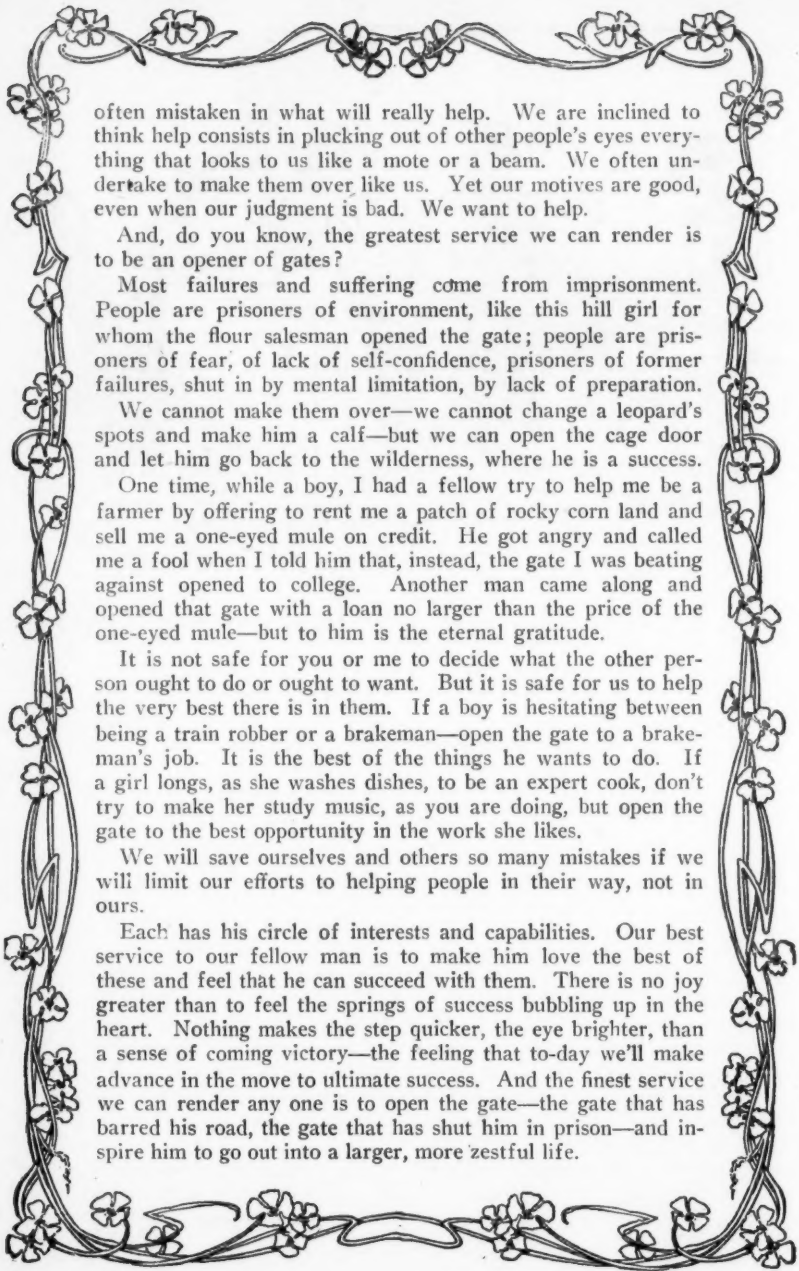
"The other day she married one of the finest men in Carlton, and turned over the business to her younger brother."

The train thumped along over a crossing. The flour man looked out of the window with a pleased expression.

"Somehow," he said, "I like to think of that better than anything I ever did."

There are few feelings more universal than that—satisfaction over having helped some one. Talk with bankers, with doctors, with lawyers, with laborers, teachers, workers of all sorts, and the story they tell with the greatest degree of pleasure is how, at a critical time, they helped some one. In spite of our self-seeking, in spite of hard, bitter fights for existence, there always is a stir in us, a prompting to help some one else.

Sometimes we go at it awkwardly, meddlingly. We are

A decorative border of stylized flowers and vines frames the text on the page.

often mistaken in what will really help. We are inclined to think help consists in plucking out of other people's eyes everything that looks to us like a mote or a beam. We often undertake to make them over like us. Yet our motives are good, even when our judgment is bad. We want to help.

And, do you know, the greatest service we can render is to be an opener of gates?

Most failures and suffering come from imprisonment. People are prisoners of environment, like this hill girl for whom the flour salesman opened the gate; people are prisoners of fear, of lack of self-confidence, prisoners of former failures, shut in by mental limitation, by lack of preparation.

We cannot make them over—we cannot change a leopard's spots and make him a calf—but we can open the cage door and let him go back to the wilderness, where he is a success.

One time, while a boy, I had a fellow try to help me be a farmer by offering to rent me a patch of rocky corn land and sell me a one-eyed mule on credit. He got angry and called me a fool when I told him that, instead, the gate I was beating against opened to college. Another man came along and opened that gate with a loan no larger than the price of the one-eyed mule—but to him is the eternal gratitude.

It is not safe for you or me to decide what the other person ought to do or ought to want. But it is safe for us to help the very best there is in them. If a boy is hesitating between being a train robber or a brakeman—open the gate to a brakeman's job. It is the best of the things he wants to do. If a girl longs, as she washes dishes, to be an expert cook, don't try to make her study music, as you are doing, but open the gate to the best opportunity in the work she likes.

We will save ourselves and others so many mistakes if we will limit our efforts to helping people in their way, not in ours.

Each has his circle of interests and capabilities. Our best service to our fellow man is to make him love the best of these and feel that he can succeed with them. There is no joy greater than to feel the springs of success bubbling up in the heart. Nothing makes the step quicker, the eye brighter, than a sense of coming victory—the feeling that to-day we'll make advance in the move to ultimate success. And the finest service we can render any one is to open the gate—the gate that has barred his road, the gate that has shut him in prison—and inspire him to go out into a larger, more zestful life.



The Weasel and the Bronze Plaque

By Frederick R. Bechdolt

Author of "Black Gold," "The Young Boss," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

Some office boys make you mad.
This one will make you laugh—hard.

SAMMY HENLEIN, the *Mercury's* head office boy, sat at his desk, which is the sentry box beside the editorial department's entrance. Outspread before him was one of those early editions with which morning journalism delights in tantalizing the public every evening. He was reading with a peculiar intentness, which manifested itself in the absolute rigidity of his slender body and the immobility of all his sharp features.

Things about him, both inanimate and animate, were doing their best to bring him out of the state into which he had projected his personality. The buzzer, which lay concealed somewhere beneath his desk, was rasping savagely; the telephone bell was wearing itself out beside his oblivious ear. A stiff-backed gentleman, whose close-clipped mustache and stony lineaments carried an atmosphere of directors' meetings and polished-mahogany office furniture,

was fidgeting himself into a state bordering the apoplectic a few feet away. Beside this latter—for the chairs in the *Mercury's* anteroom are arranged in a single democratic row against the wall—a rusty little woman, whose bonnet was askew and whose eyes were hard with belligerence, was beginning a recital of the woes that had brought her hither. Her right-hand neighbor, who had hastened to the office with some inside information for the sporting editor, proved unreceptive as an audience, and she turned to him upon the left.

"Ye're a family man—don't tell me that ye're not——"

"Madam!" The stiff-backed gentleman's tone was icier than his frigid eye.

"Don't 'madam' me!"

There was a peculiar note in her voice that made him shudder. As one who finds himself confronted by unexpected and grave possibilities and calls for aid, he leaned toward Sammy's desk.

"Now, boy!" he said hoarsely.

"You gotta wait a minute." Sammy barely raised his eyes from the paper and let them drop at once.

He who was bidding the audience with the sporting editor caused diversion by announcing, loudly and in no uncertain terms, his intention of using direct methods in obtaining his quest.

"One more minute," he wound up, "and I'll kick in that door."

But Sammy continued reading a two-stick item on the inside page. As head office boy, his function was that of an emissary moving between the hidden forces behind the closed portal of the editorial department and the general public. Until he had secured permission, no visitor could enter. In his absence—or, as was now the case, during his oblivion to duty—traffic at that portal became jammed.

The abbreviated item, which he was

reading for the third time, contained nothing startling to the ordinary individual; it was buried in one of those pages that are made up early, and it consisted of facts that had been carried to the writer by an official press bureau. In its entirety, it read:

The ceremonies marking Butchers' Day at the Pacific-Asiatic Exposition took place in the Court of the Stars. Thousands gathered under the shadow of the Tower of Light to witness the rendition of a program that began, promptly on the arrival of the procession from the main gate, with band music. A solo, "I Love You, California," by Miss Lucy Dolan, was followed by the speech of welcome, delivered by Charles Aloysius Ryan. At the conclusion of his address, the orator presented the union with a bronze plaque.

It was the sight of these few lines in black print that had first attracted the attention, and then engrossed all the faculties, of Sammy, holding him spellbound during the crystallization to purpose of a great idea.

The idiosyncrasies of office boys on morning papers usually develop along two definite lines, one of which leads toward the sports' desk and the other toward the night police reporters' room. Official duties are neglected either for the compilation of batting averages or researches in low life. But Sammy was an exception to the rule, and it was plain to see that he was ordained to graduate into the business office, for the only vice he owned was acquisitive in its very nature. He was a collector.

When first he had come to the *Mercury*, he had been passing out of the picture-postal-card stage, having previously accumulated many hundreds of tobacco tags, which he had affixed to cloth-covered boards. There had also been an era of stamp gathering, and a time when he had longed—as vainly as you or I might covet an eight-cylinder car—to be a numismatist. But after his arrival on the paper, he had seen wider fields of activity, and the

garnering of articles whose virtue lay in the mere monotony of numbers had ceased. He had tucked the post-card albums off in a corner of his room, along with the stamps and tobacco tags, and had begun to acquire what he called "specimens." The term is more than generic; it is universal.

As the months of his service passed and Sammy advanced from a mere nameless copy boy to guardian of the door, becoming in this progress as much of an institution as the cashier—and far more popular in this day when business-office rules forbid advances of salaries—he gradually employed every department of the local staff in the furtherance of his hobby. From the gray-haired men whose close inner knowledge of events brought them into frequent consultation with the editor himself on questions of policy, down to the rawest cub, the reporters found themselves assuming ex-officio rôles as mendicants—and even as larcenists. Sammy's desk in the anteroom became a temporary warehouse wherein strange things were stored in transit.

At times it contained, among other articles:

A forged check.

A pair of eyeglasses, rightful property of William Jennings Bryan.

A human head preserved in alcohol. (Still the object of inquiry on the part of the district-attorney's office.)

Dried orchids, garnered from a society wedding.

A small vial containing nitroglycerin.

A fragment of a wrecked aeroplane.

A copy of a weekly paper suppressed by the postal authorities.

A glove worn by Battling Nelson when he lost the championship.

A license empowering the owner to operate a jitney.

These samples, chosen at random, will perhaps give a fair idea of the catholic extent of Sammy's desires and

of the varying spheres in which his aids moved in their reportorial capacities. He was a quiet-spoken youth, but he owned a pertinacity that accomplished great things. The political reporter, who sometimes wrote editorials and possessed a gift of epithet, once alluded to him as "The Human Weasel"; and perhaps because the name was suited to his appearance, it stuck. Thus far, when he had set his heart on any portable article, he had got it.

And now it should be easier to understand the nature of that idea which enthralled Sammy to the discomfort of the visitors in the anteroom and the detriment of progress in the editorial department.

That progress was restored by the telephone operator just as the rusty little woman was renewing her spirited conversation with the stiff-backed gentleman. Emerging from her cubbyhole, the guardian of the switchboard awakened the sentry at the portal by shaking him vigorously.

"Say," she demanded, in a voice quiet, but corrosive, "don't you think you better come out of it?"

Sammy looked up slowly from the paper.

"Well?" Her tone became menacing. "The managing editor's asking for you. I'd be arrested if I told you what he's said about you."

Sammy heard her out in silence, and in silence arose to usher the iron-visaged gentleman with the close-clipped mustache into the presence of the outraged head of the editorial forces. All the time he was doing this, and during the remainder of the evening, he was acting subconsciously. His mind was with the printed narrative of the festivities of the day at the great Pacific-Asiatic Exposition, which was drawing visitors from all the world to the city this summer.

"Gee!" he told himself many times. "I gotta get one o' them plaques!"



"It's a specimen, mamma," he whispered hoarsely. "I gotta get it."

Now, as has been the case with many a man who has awed his posterity by moving mountains, purpose had taken possession of Sammy, not suddenly, but so gradually that he had never realized its advent until it had become a supreme motive. This idea had been soaking into and through his entire being for months. Its germ had originated one day during the period of tree planting, corner-stone laying, and inaugurating of buildings that had preceded the opening of the fair; the period when the newspapers had been reproducing half-tone facsimiles of the

bronze plaques that distinguished visitors bore away with them.

Upon that hectic day, when bands had been playing and processions had been forming and automobiles had been filling with high-hatted, frock-coated, plethoric gentlemen, the *Mercury's* local force had invaded the grounds almost en masse; and that evening Sammy had seen his first bronze plaque. The foot-weary reporters had returned; the city desk had been littered with the manuscripts of speeches; the linotypes in the composing room had been molding a thousand fervid adjectives

from boiling lead. The man whose name was synonymous with that of the *Mercury* had entered the anteroom in the full panoply of the twentieth-century public function. In one hand he had carried a small, flat case; and this he had laid down on Sammy's desk when a breathless henchman had called him into the hall for consultation.

Sammy had recognized that packet, and the moment the great man's back had been turned, the budding purpose that had been swelling, unknown to him, in his soul had made him do what no other employee in the whole shop would have dared to do. He had opened the little case and gazed at the bronze disk upon whose upturned face his employer's name was engraved. Softly he had turned the memento over and had seen the insignia of the Pacific-Asiatic Exposition. He had managed to replace the plaque and close the cover before its owner had returned, but the brief scrutiny had left an indelible image on his brain.

During the summer, that image had grown in intensity in direct proportion with the decrease in dignity of the bronze plaque as an institution. For in those weeks, with the cessation of building and dedication activities, and with the failure of notables to continue as a drawing card, the management of the exposition had instituted the celebration of special days. Thus every populous organization, from New Thought to the rearers of swine, had gathered within those marvelous courts to listen to felicitations and to witness the presentation of plaques to their head men. The onerous duty of speech-making had passed the capacity of the regular officials and was now being shared by a band of lesser lights, who wore their high hats and frock coats with a dignity which never suggested the fact that they were getting wages for so doing. And the term "bronze plaque" became a sort of byword in

that city, inseparable from the thought of the exposition, just as the term "grape juice" has become inseparable from the thought of the American navy.

So Sammy, cherishing what had been at first a vague longing, found himself to-night owned by a burning lust. The knowledge burst upon him—a discovery of what had been ailing him for a period of many weeks—and after that moment, when he turned aside from the open paper to attend upon his duties, he had no other thought.

"I gotta get one o' them plaques," he repeated, as he left the office for his home. And all the way thither he was pondering as to ways and means.

He occupied a little hall bedroom in his father's flat in one of the city's most crowded districts; and it was only by virtue of the few dollars he brought home with him every pay night that the family allowed him these narrow quarters to himself. Had they given him a bedmate, he would have been obliged to store some of his precious collection on the back porch, along with the garbage cans.

Prominent among the various objects that crammed the place, and confronting the bed—whence he could gaze upon it every night as he retired—was a set of unpainted wooden shelves which Sammy had constructed by dint of much labor. These held the articles of greater importance, the specimens whose rarity, or the history of whose obtaining, made them doubly precious in their owner's eyes. To-night, as he climbed into his bed, he did not follow his usual custom of looking over these shelves, but kept his eyes riveted upon one spot.

The blue-white rays of a street light fell on that place, which was unoccupied, and on the two objects flanking it on either side. One of these latter was the pair of eyeglasses that had last adorned the nose of America's last secretary of state; the other was that

grisly fragment of mortality which has already been sufficiently described. And the bit of shelf that intervened was destined for a specimen worthy of these neighbors. Gazing now upon that interval, Sammy pictured it in its mind's eye as occupied by a flat case whose uplifted cover revealed a circular disk of bronze. And so he fell asleep. But later, in his dreams, he muttered:

"He's gotta get it!"

That dream was not an idle one, as Parsons, who headed the *Mercury's* exposition detail, learned the next evening when he came in from the grounds for the regular consultation with the city editor that prefaced his home-going. He was passing Sammy's desk when he felt a lean hand upon his arm and heard his name called.

"Hello, Weasel!" He smiled down into the sharp face. And then, for his acquaintanceship with Sammy was long and intimate: "What do you want?"

Sammy reached swiftly into the top drawer of his desk and brought forth two plump cigars.

"Jimmy Coffroth give them to the sporting editor this afternoon, but 'Spike's' tryin' to pass fer life insurance this fall, an' he's gotta lay off."

He handed the cigars to Parsons, who seated himself on the edge of the desk and, biting the end from one, asked: "Well?"

"Well"—Sammy was outwardly cool and never had he looked so deserving of his nickname, but inwardly he was choking—"say—you gotta good, long drag out to the fair by this time, ain't you?"

Parsons knew Sammy, and he understood that the motive behind those words was not mere admiration for himself; but he warmed to the most poignant flattery a reporter can receive.

"I can," he asserted, "get anything—short of a pass to the grounds for an outsider. And I defy"—he paused, for he was not by nature blasphemous,

and raked his mind for the nearest approach to the term he had in mind—"I defy"—he named the owner of the *Mercury*—"to shill his own mother in."

"I wasn't thinkin' of a pass, Mr. Parsons," Sammy said swiftly. "I knew you c'u'd do it for me. I'm after a specimen."

"Sure! I knew that all the time. What do you want? The Tower of Light?"

With a gravity that only a born collector can understand, Sammy shook his head.

"There ain't any place where I could put it. No. I tell you—I want you should get me one o' them bronze plaques."

Parsons whistled slowly.

"I never saw any of them floating around, Weasel. And they cost nine bones apiece. But I'll see if we can't lift one for you somewhere." He departed gravely, for he liked Sammy, and the cigar was worthy of a gold medal, to say nothing of a bronze plaque.

A week passed, and Sammy saw Parsons every evening, but he did not mention the subject that was occupying all his thoughts. He stopped the reporter twice to hand forth tribute, which he in his turn had extorted from the sporting editor with the faulty heart action. And Parsons, who by these manifestations understood the depth of Sammy's purpose, impaled on a spindle on his desk in the Press Building a memorandum worded thus: "Bronze plaque. Look up."

Every day he saw that writing, and every day one of the reporters on duty under him harassed some department head over in the Service Building on that subject. Visiting delegates from various fraternal, industrial, social, and beneficiary orders, on departing from the festivities in honor of their brotherhoods, found themselves quietly and



Sammy waved that banter aside with a gesture. "I got business," he asserted, with quiet dignity.

discreetly importuned by those upon whose graces they relied for the publication of their portraits in the various city papers.

But it was all to no purpose. At the end of the week, Parsons, of his own accord, stopped beside Sammy's desk.

"Nothing stirring," he said. "These joiners hang to their plaques like grim death. Every one of them's dead set on taking his brass saucer home and nailing it to the lodge-room wall. It looks like we'll have to sandbag somebody."

"How about the c'mmissioners?" Sammy asked hoarsely.

Parsons shook his head.

"You can't pry one loose from those glad-handers. I had two men up there, and then went myself. There's only one plaque ever got away from them.

They'd engraved the name of the wrong man on it, and the head of the press bureau got it. He's using it for an ash tray and says he won't give it up to anybody."

"Well," Sammy gulped, "will you make another stab?"

"I'll do all I can," Parsons promised.

But at the end of another week he reported that every effort had been useless.

"Not a paper in town but has used its drag, Weasel, and nothing doing."

Sammy sat rigid, and his face was paler than usual; but neither the rigidity nor the pallor was that of despair. He was thinking fast and hard. It has been noted in this narrative that he was endowed with a pertinacity of unusual dimensions. This native trait had received an elementary education

during an early youth spent in a neighborhood whose Hibernian environment made self-assertion one of life's prime necessities. But its classical course had come in the editorial rooms of the *Mercury*. There Sammy had learned that the playwright who had had *Richelieu* take the center down stage to erase the word "fail" from youth's bright lexicon had but created an easy-going prototype for the twentieth-century city editor. Harkening to the tales of reportorial prowess, he learned the finer points of mountain moving and had polished off his pertinacity with what the night police reporter characterized as "the gall of a burglar."

So now he sat very still, pallid from the effort of concentration. And when he arose from his chair a half hour or so later, it was with the air of a man who has a day's work ahead of him.

During the next week, three things took place, all of an unusual nature.

On pay night there was an altercation in Sammy's family. Voices were uplifted in grief, anger, and remonstrance. If any one had looked through the window, he would have seen the other members of the household surrounding the eldest son, who preserved a maddening silence while they assailed him with pleading and vituperation. Out of various adjurations flung to high heaven, a listener might have gathered that the youth had betrayed his relatives by cold-hearted larceny and deep-dyed embezzlement. This was true to the extent of a dollar and a quarter of the week's wages. At a late hour, when all the others had desisted from sheer weariness, Sammy essayed explanation to the only confidante he had ever known. He laid his head upon her wide bosom and: "It's a specimen, mamma," he whispered hoarsely. "I gotta get it."

And—perhaps it was because of the very fact that her first-born's longing was beyond her understanding—his

mother stroked his lank hair as she repeated softly:

"But, Sammy, you know you didn't ought to do it," and then kissed him in token of her forgiveness.

The next thing that happened created comment in the *Mercury's* editorial rooms. The telephone girl and the city editor, who came most intimately in contact with Sammy and required his services most frequently, were first to notice it.

"What you doing? Writing a scenario?" the former demanded one evening, when she had caught him out at his desk after repeated fruitless soundings of the buzzer.

Sammy honored her with one brief glance of suspicion as he tucked the manuscript over which he had been sweating into a top drawer, which he locked ostentatiously.

"Because," she went on acidly, "you c'n just as well save yourself the trouble. That bunch o' burglars in Los Angeles don't buy nothin'; they only steal the dope off of you. I know, because I tried it myself."

But Sammy replaced the key in his pocket and offered no confidence. Nor could she wring any admissions from him on subsequent occasions of this sort.

Even the city editor, with his own multitude of troubles, found time to wonder at the extent of Sammy's writings, which were now keeping desk men fuming and visitors waiting for long periods. Later in that week, reporters, seeking to transcribe the news they had garnered, found The Weasel manipulating their typewriters with that painful, one-fingered slowness common to all office boys.

The third occurrence came suddenly in the office of the managing editor, where Sammy appeared during a slack moment. He greeted that functionary calmly, and announced that he desired

the afternoon of the morrow as a half holiday on pay.

"You c'n put young Dorgan on the job," he added. "He'll hold it down, all right, till six o'clock, I guess."

Which admission, from one whose shoes were always being sought by subordinates, was startling in itself. The managing editor opened wide his eyes.

"Did your aunt die?" he ventured. "The team isn't playing on the home lot this week, Weasel."

Sammy waved that banter aside with a gesture.

"I got business," he asserted, with quiet dignity, and departed with the permission of the managing editor, whom he left feeling as one who has made a faux pas.

The next morning, Sammy was up earlier than usual and abroad on the city's streets. "Abroad" is perhaps too narrow a term, for never in the history of the local trolley system had a five-cent piece been known to bring such rich fruit in mileage as Sammy gathered from that sum by his skillful use of transfers. There was something weird about it. Case-hardened conductors, accustomed to the deepest wiles of messenger boys, found themselves, during the last few laps of Sammy's journeyings, assailed by geographical arguments that left them dumb and dizzy.

During these wanderings, he paused to interview various men who, when reminded by him, acknowledged his acquaintance with varying degrees of warmth. These interviews always ended with the production of the typewritten manuscript; and in each case the subject affixed his signature to the paper. By noontime, Sammy had secured the autograph of a myopic German shoemaker in Butchertown, a white-bearded Hebrew peddler out in the suburbs, a Greek bootblack on Main Street near the city hall, a turbaned Sikh who kept a lodging house for Mo-

ammedan laborers on the water front, and the secretary of the chicken-pickers' union in the basement of a downtown commission house. Then he boarded a street car for the exposition.

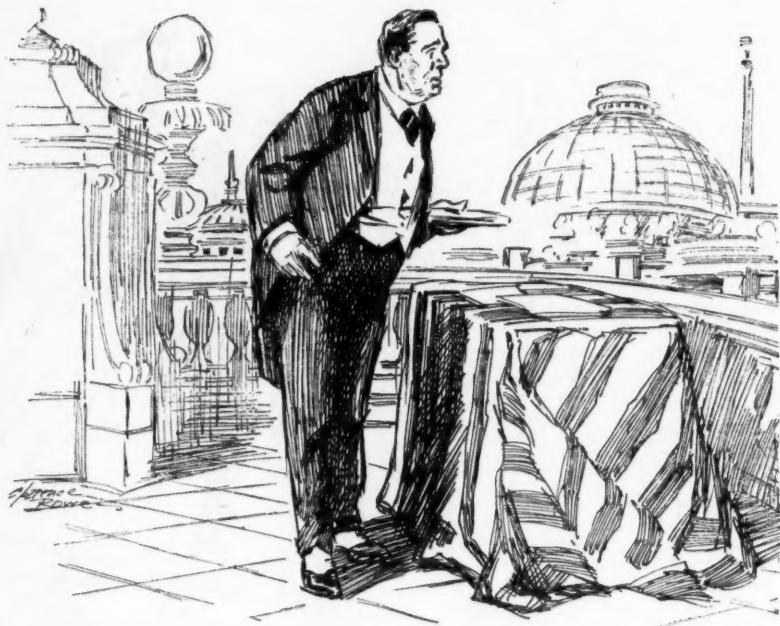
The director of the special days of the Pacific-Asiatic Exposition was sitting in his office in the Service Building when the stenographer announced Sammy during the first hour after lunch. He was a man accustomed to handling members of his species under somewhat remarkable conditions, and he had learned the art of surrounding the little word "no" with enough persiflage to leave the rejected caller gasping in an atmosphere of good-fellowship that would envelop him until he was beyond the environs of the room. A polish had grown upon the director's surface; it was impenetrable—like a steel lacquer. But when he saw Sammy, he realized—for he had grown to know humankind during his service—that here stood one whose unpolished exterior was going to make this interview a case of diamond cut diamond.

"What," he asked, with a courtesy that was perfect in that it was unpromising, "can I do for you?" And he smiled.

Sammy acknowledged this greeting with a bow whose stiffness was due to the number of rehearsals he had undergone in the privacy of his little hall bedroom. Then, as one who is following a set plan from which he does not intend to deviate in the slightest, he sat down unbidden and crossed his legs with all the ease of a press agent in the presence of the city editor.

"I have come," said he slowly, "in behalf of the alumnis of the night schools of this city." His tone was declamatory, and there was a stiffness in his pose that carried a suggestion of forensics.

The director of special days opened his eyes a little wider and unbent a trifle.



Charles Aloysius Ryan saw emerging with considerable celerity a sharp-faced youth

"Just so," he acknowledged carefully.

"There are," Sammy went on, in words whose choosing had kept many a visitor cooling his heels in the ante-room of the *Mercury*, "more'n two thousan' graduates of the night schools of this city." He paused to wipe his brow.

The director of special days nodded and repeated the number reflectively.

Hearing this, Sammy looked up sharply.

"An' each o' the graduates has got a bunch o' folks," he extemporized. "Safe to figger on five friends to a graduate."

The interpolation left him visibly groping; one hand sought his coat pocket as if perhaps in search of notes;

he cleared his throat uneasily. Then abruptly:

"The exposition has give many special days," he resumed, "an'—an'—an' the alumnis of many schools an' colleges has been invited out here to these grounds as the honored guests of this here management."

He saw the look that crossed the director's face, and he hastened to more extempore argument:

"Not that they ain't paid their half dollars all right at the gate. We all know that, o' course, mister. An' we're dead willin' to pay ourn. But here's the idea." He fell back once more on his own more deliberate composition. "The alumnis of the night schools of this city ain't got any bid from the management of the exposition for any spe-



who crossed the intervening space and seized the flat packet from his outstretched hand.

cial day; and there is a feelin' which is goin' round among the members that the management is passin' us up. And fer that reason, mister, I been chose fer a c'mmittee of one to come an' see you in regards to this matter." He paused, breathless, and there were drops of perspiration on his pallid forehead.

"You want a special day for the alumni of the night schools?" the director repeated, and was silent for a moment. "More than two thousand graduates."

"With five friends and relations to every one o' them," Sammy cut in.

The director bowed his head and frowned; but Sammy understood that the frown was histrionic. And Sammy knew, as well as the director—for he

had that information from Parsons—the amount of good gray matter that was being used to fill out the schedule that lay on the flat-topped desk between them.

"Have the alumni acted on the matter?" the director asked. "Formally, I mean?"

In silence, Sammy handed him the typewritten paper, with its signatures, under which was emblazoned, in capital letters, the legend: "Committee in Charge." The other adjusted his glasses on his nose while he perused the document.

"Very well," he said at length. "We'll see what we can do. If you will arrange a program——"

"Here y'are!" Sammy handed him another typewritten sheet.

As the director glanced down this, he smiled.

"It's brief enough," he said. "But it seems satisfactory."

"They wanta get a date to-day," said Sammy.

The director frowned again, regarding the rigid face of his caller; then turned the leaves of that schedule. After a considerable time:

"How would next Wednesday suit?" he asked. "Too soon?"

"Next Wednesday?" Sammy used a mighty effort, and was able to hesitate; then: "Yes. There'll be time fer another meetin'."

On Wednesday afternoon, Charles Aloysius Ryan was reminded by strains of martial music to glance at his watch; and, so doing, he realized that, lunching overlong, he had allowed the hour of two-thirty to arrive without his presence in the Court of the Stars, where he was due to earn his daily wage by oratory. He seized his high hat in one hand and, clapping it upon his head, grasped in the other hand the typewritten manuscript of a speech he had prepared in accordance with his interpretation of the following memorandum, handed him two days before: "Alumni, Night Schools, City. Two thousand members." Thus equipped, he ran down the stairs of the Press Building and hastened through the corridor in time to see the usual multitude falling into the wake of a company of marines. With as much expedition as was prudent—for he was a man of extensive and imposing presence—he made his way toward the appointed spot.

Meantime, the parade and the spectators were passing under the Tower of Light into the magnificence of that famous court whose architectural surroundings invariably dwarfed whatever spectacular efforts mankind essayed between the lofty walls. Heading the column, the blue-clad musicians awoke the

echoes with those spirited harmonies which quicken the pulses of men until they follow blindly, no matter whether the march end in a scene of carnage or of speech-making. Behind the band came the escort, to whom it mattered not that none marched between as guests of honor.

These honored visitors were trailing in the rear of the last legginged set of fours, unnoted by every one in that assemblage, even as they were uncomprehending of all about them. For of the three who came, jostled by eager seat seekers in the mob's van, one was too nearsighted to distinguish anything but a vague blur of forms; another walked an alien in a strange land whose customs he could not grasp; and the third was scanning the throng with small eyes that heeded nothing else in their search for a man wearing a high hat.

Thus the alumni of the night schools of the city entered upon the festivities of the day that had been set apart for them by the Pacific-Asiatic Exposition. And if their representation was not large, it was at least comprehensive, for it included on the left a turbaned Sikh and on the right a son of Schleswig-Holstein, while its self-appointed president—with the last five cents of that dollar and a quarter in his pocket—came between, the scion of a race that many nations have honored and every land has known. Of others who had signed that petition, there were none present; and if any of those eligible to places of honor had read the brief items announcing the event in the daily papers, they had failed to take advantage of the opportunity. The graduates of the institution that Sammy claimed as his Alma Mater possessed more earnestness for knowledge than college spirit.

The band reached its stand on the court's farther side; the marines swung jauntily past the plashing fountain in the middle; the trio followed; and the

crowd spread itself over a goodly portion of the green benches. There was a moment's silence; and then the air resounded with the strains of "Hail to the Chief." During the last bars, a perspiring man, the sight of whose tall hat brought to Sammy his first full breath for a half hour, walked quickly to the speaker's stand and removed his shining headgear.

Charles Aloysius Ryan took a look about him and bowed to the crowd. Speeches meant meat and drink to him; and multitudes, be they great or small, meant nothing. There were those whose duty it was to take account of each day's gate receipts; his work ended with his peroration. Somewhere down there, he knew, a committee must be waiting for his conclusion; and among that committee a president who would make the fitting response. That had never failed. So, now that "Hail to the Chief" was completed, he cleared his throat and embarked upon that number of Sammy's program whose climax was the end of Sammy's single purpose.

Charles Aloysius Ryan owned a large, resonant voice, and he had learned, during these months of service, to choose sonorous phrases with which to round out his periods. So he proceeded first, through many words, to "God's green footstool." After which, he launched into a preface to pave the way toward "the young of this fair land." Thence, diverging into what he and his intimates called his "sob stuff," he gradually attained his peroration, which he capped with a fervid appeal to the new generation that they "use to the highest ends the lofty equipment which this lusty commonwealth of ours, and this marvelous city that owns you as its children, have placed in your eager hands."

And now he glanced away from the rear benches, to which, according to his habit, he had been speaking, and his

eye became anxious as he sought for some trace of the bright young faces that he had thus far been taking on trust. Not seeing them in the regular location, which was directly under his nose, he allowed a shadow of apprehension to cross his ruddy countenance; but, shaking off the fleeting fear, he went on manfully, according to time-worn schedule:

"It becomes, therefore, my duty—nay, I may say my privilege—acting in behalf of the management of this great Pacific-Asiatic Exposition, to present to you, as a fitting memorial of this never-to-be-forgotten occasion——"

His brow cleared, for a slight form was rising out of the jam in the front seats. From between a turbaned brown man and a stoop-shouldered auditor whose thick glasses had been gleaming up at him in the afternoon sunlight, Charles Aloysius Ryan saw emerging with considerable celerity a sharp-faced youth who crossed the intervening space and seized the flat packet from his outstretched hand. The orator hesitated; he was not accustomed to such abrupt methods. Then, recovering his composure, he lifted his voice to give the final words their full sonority.

"——this bronze plaque," he said, and sat down.

Of the response which the president of the alumni of the night schools made, no word has been preserved; but it is a matter of newspaper legend that this response was as brief as it was pointed.

That night the blue-white rays of the street light streamed through the window of Sammy's room and fell upon the space that had until this time been left vacant, on the top shelf of the collection. Following the path of those rays from his bed, Sammy's eyes rested, in that satisfaction which only one who has accomplished a great purpose can understand, upon his bronze plaque.

What Women May Learn from *the Bosses*

A Tea-Table Discussion

By Hildegarde Lavender

Author of "On the Joys of Class Distinctions," "Leaks," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

THOSE of the doctor's intimate little group who happened to disagree with her political and social theories, awaited her appearance at the tea table, on the first day after the defeat of the woman-suffrage amendment in New York, with that eagerness to learn how she would disport herself under disappointment which gives so keen a zest to the study of psychology in its applied form. But the doctor, instead of seeming downcast—which was almost unthinkable, anyway, for she did not take easily to depression—or grim and saturnine, which would have been her more characteristic way of meeting defeat, entered with an unusual air of buoyancy and power.

"Extra strong to-day, doctor?" asked the hostess sympathetically, holding the teapot poised above the cup. "And with lots of lemon?"

"About as usual," answered the doctor, missing the figurative implication of the inquiry, though no one else in the group did.

"She's had all the sour she needs for a while," giggled the bride, whose suffragism was a wavering thing, fluctuating with her Harry's opinions as voiced each evening.

The doctor stared in question, and then, understanding without words, laughed cheerfully.

"Oh, the defeat?" she said. "But that doesn't embitter me. In fact, to

poll half a million votes in a stronghold of Eastern conservatism like New York seems to me——"

"Spare us, good Lord, spare——" some one began to quote the litany.

But the doctor darted no piercing glance of reproof at the mocker, and merely laughed again as she munched her plum cake.

"Why this cheer?" asked the grandmother. "Of course, it's all very well for us to bear up bravely in the face of the enemy; but among ourselves and our friends, why do we not admit that we have been beaten, and that we can't have our rights for another two or four years, at least? It is all very well to be gallant losers, but let's not overdo it and refuse to acknowledge facts."

"I was an inspector in my district," announced the doctor, with apparent irrelevance.

"Well, even if you were," said the débutante gloomily—for the débutante, being young, demanded that her moon be handed to her on the instant when she cried for it, and was horribly downcast when it was withheld for a night or two—"I don't see why you should be so abominably perky about it. To dash around from polling station to polling station in a blue-and-yellow automobile doesn't seem to my untutored mind an experience to make up for all the wasted efforts, all the——"

"Wasted nothing!" cried the doctor,

with conviction and a noticeable disregard of the niceties of English usage. "You might as well whine that a field doesn't produce a magnificent crop of corn as soon as it's been plowed. There are other processes necessary. There's fertilizing and harrowing and seeding; and then there's cultivation and more cultivation; and there's always time—ninety days, a hundred and twenty days—ever so many days—between the sowing and the reaping. We've done a fair job of plowing and harrowing and fertilizing and seeding, we suffragists; and it's cultivation—that means weeding out vegetable errors and keeping the earth soft, you poor things who are ignorant of agriculture!—and time, time, time that we need now. Nothing has been wasted. No one need be disappointed at the result. For myself, as I say, I was an inspector, and I'm almost glad of the defeat."

"Glad!" they caroled in varying tones.

"Yes, glad. And I'll tell you why. Defeat will bring more women into the

ranks of the workers than victory would have done. Women—a great many of them—feel that they didn't 'do their bit' in the last campaign; they're

volunteering for the next—I mean for the present campaign." She laughed. "You know how every blow registered against the Allies is better than a victory, as far as recruiting in England goes. Well, that's the result of indecisive defeats in every sort of campaign. Every one of them increases the number of volunteers—doubles, trebles them. And what does that mean for the suffrage cause, the cause of woman in politics?"

"I pause for a reply," mocked the debutante impertinently, but still gloomily.

"It means this," went on the doctor, ignoring her. "It means that there will be a great many women trained for political life when the time comes for them to exercise political rights—a

greater number of trained persons than has ever been admitted to the electorate at any time before. And what does that mean?"



Antonino is going to vote wrongly, foolishly, and against the general good also. But he is casting that vote because of neighborliness, because of friendship.



"Upon neighborliness!" triumphed the doctor. "Women will have to learn to be neigh-

"That a greater number of women than ever before are going to be so given to committee work and meetings," sighed the grandmother, "that they will never again be able to settle down to their own jobs of keeping pleasant homes and conducting an agreeable social life." For the grandmother was an uncertain quantity in

suffrage discussions, as well as the bride.

"There you are wrong," cried the doctor. "I might have agreed with you until yesterday, but I don't any longer. For I have discovered, thanks to having been an inspector for my assembly district yesterday, that successful politics depends upon—what?"



borly again if they go into politics."

"Graft, Harry says," murmured the bride.

"Upon neighborliness!" triumphed the doctor. "Women will have to learn to be neighborly again if they go into politics. Neighborliness, of course, is supposed to be one of their inborn characteristics. But modern life in the cities, at any rate, has made them for-

get it. Well, suffrage—politics, that is—is going to enlist more women than ever before in this State; and they are going to learn, inevitably and most fortunately, how to play politics. They are going to learn from the bosses. And the chief lesson in that course of playing politics will be the lesson of neighborliness."

"We're waiting patiently to learn how you make that out," said the hostess, while the doctor paused to refill her cup and to take another slice of plum cake.

"I shall enjoy nothing more than telling you exactly how I make it out," proclaimed the doctor.

"Because, if it's going to be any more of that 'sisterhood' stuff we hear from the orators at the meetings—" began the debutante daskly.

"It isn't, though that is perfectly good and true 'stuff,' as you call it," said the doctor serenely. "It's merely what we shall learn from the bosses. I discovered a lot about them yesterday when I dashed from polling station to polling station in my gaudy automobile, and gave advice and sandwiches and lists of favorable registrations to our suffrage watchers. I learned, for example, that their power is based upon neighborliness, and nothing else. Neighborliness may be prostituted to base uses, like every other good institution and good quality. But it needn't be."

"Why not be chronological, so that we may follow your mental proceedings with less bewilderment?" inquired Madame Cræsus, who was—almost of course—an anti.

"Very well. My assembly district, as you may know, embraced two extremes of financial condition. Its western edge was all that was prosperous and respectable; its extreme eastern edge was a region of entrenched poverty, with all that entrenched poverty in a big city like ours means—drunken-

ness, dirt, disorder, failure of every kind. Lodging houses line its streets—I don't mean the dingy boarding-house type of lodging, where the struggling young artist always begins her career, but the ten-cent-a-night hive, patronized by derelicts in the great business of getting ahead. Lodging houses, tenements, saloons—every one is acquainted with the physical aspects of such neighborhoods from fiction, if not from experience in district visiting.

"Now, my own observation and the report of our watchers in all the polling stations in that district show what I have just told you—that the power of the boss is built upon neighborliness. He may use it for the most immoral purposes, but there it is—that good, simple, human quality, in which women ought to be particularly rich—in which, as a matter of fact, they are particularly rich."

"You're skipping again," the hostess told her. "You aren't proving neighborliness—you're only assuming it, declaring it."

"Listen to me!" cried the doctor impatiently. "I stayed for half an hour in one of the silk-stocking polling stations, while the watcher went out to get a breath of air or a headache powder or some sort of a restorative; and I saw the work of the election captain of the dominant party in that district. He wanted to poll a large vote, of course—they all did; but there was difficulty about it. He would summon his pickets—those young politicians who stand a hundred feet away from the polls and instruct the ignorant how to mark a ballot for their own party, who deliver the last-minute arguments, who run to the homes of voters who have registered, but have not yet voted, to hale them willy-nilly to the performance of their civic duty. I heard him confer with them.

"Was A. at home? Why hadn't he come to the polls yet? Oh, A. had

gone out of town the day before, so as to make an early start on the golf course on election morning. What was the matter with D., who had also failed to put in an appearance? The picket didn't know, but he sent to inquire. Oh, D. was still asleep—up too late the night before to make an early start; but he'd try to mobilize before five o'clock, and to cast his vote. And so on and so on and so on.

"The captain of the dominant party in the election district was annoyed, but he was nonplused; it was evident that he was not on neighborly enough terms with all these neighbors of his to wield a strong influence with them. You can't live on a casual, cold plane with your neighbors for three hundred and sixty-four days a year, and exert a powerfully friendly 'pull' with them on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November."

"You mean that, in the more prosperous districts, the election-district captains aren't able to bribe voters with little favors, I suppose," said Madame Crœsus acidly.

"I mean exactly what I say," assseverated the doctor doggedly. "I don't for an instant imagine that the captain of my silk-stocking district would have been averse to bribery, if he had thought he needed it or had known how to apply it. Merely, he had not prepared the way for it.

"Of course, neighborliness is a quality that flourishes most among the poor, and kindness is indigenous to the soil of poverty rather than to that of prosperity. It's easier to show a friendly benevolence to a man who needs a job or an overcoat or a half ton of coal than it is to John D. Rockefeller, for example. But neighborliness could be practiced in every district—will be, when women know their business as women and as future politicians.

"I tell you, it was practiced wonderfully in my region of derelicts. For

instance — a henchman picket comes running breathlessly to the captain, stationed just outside the sacred rail that divides the election board from the world. Antonino Ferrari's boy has just been arrested for celebrating a political victory too early and building a bonfire in a narrow street.

"Does the election-district captain express a polite regret, and let it go at that? Not at all. He sends the henchman into the court where

the youngster has been haled; he orders the henchman to make proper representations to the magistrate, to pay the proper fines.

"The case is taken out of the first court and is dragged across town to the Children's Court. Does the henchman remember that he has an engagement for luncheon or for golf, and abandon the bonfiring boy to his fate? Not at all. He follows to the Children's Court. He spends hours on the case. By and by he brings Antonino's son



"How about the lodging-house colonization?" asked Madame Cræsus.

"Is that an example of friendliness and neighborliness?"

safely home—reprimanded, warned, scared blue, and very docile.

"Is Antonino Ferrari going to heed a summons to come and cast his ballot, when the election-district captain sends that summons in, or is he going to put ahead of that reminder an engagement to go and drink a bottle of red wine in some cellar with a friend? He is going to vote, you can wager on it! And if the election-district captain is a corrupt person, fighting against the general good, Antonino is going to vote

wrongly, foolishly, against the general good also. But he is casting that vote because of neighborliness, because of friendship, because of gratitude, because of certain very desirable qualities."

The doctor paused the merest second for breath and went on:

"I saw it all day long. The men of the poor neighborhood knew their leader—knew him well. He was 'Dan' or 'Tim' or 'Mack' to them. They knew where he lived; they had been in his house or his flat, and he had been in theirs. They were no more interested in defeating, for instance, the new constitution than the lazy voters of the silk-stocking district were in putting it through, but they were interested, as the lazy voters of the silk-stocking district were not interested, in 'obliging' Dan or Tim or Mack; just as every single one of us is interested in doing a not-too-laborious favor for the people whom we know and visit! I might hesitate about asking any of you to lift the mortgage from my house, if I had a house or a mortgage, but I'd tell you all that I wanted you to come and hear my little music-school protégée make her début; and you'd all come, because we're friends and neighbors. Just so, all the Antoninos go and vote as Captain Dan or Leader Tim suggests, because they're all friends and neighbors. It's neighborliness that's the foundation of the whole business, not necessarily corruption."

"How about the lodging-house colonization?" asked Madame Crœsus. "Is that an example of friendliness and neighborliness?"

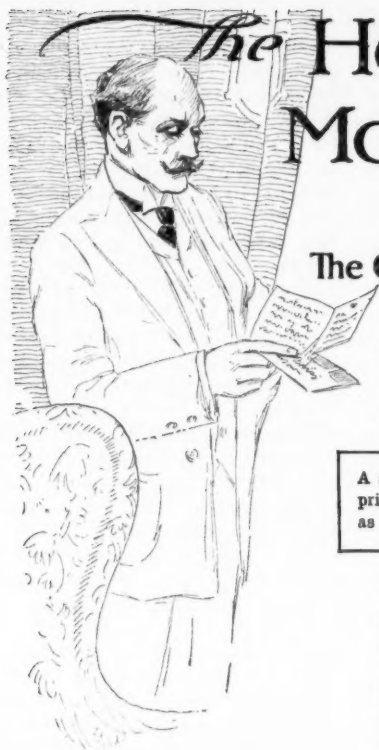
"No," admitted the doctor. "That's an example of corruption. But the point I want to make is this—the essential part of the political fabric in those poor districts is what I have said. If Dan and Tim and the other leaders paid no attention to their neighbors—their bona-fide neighbors, I mean, the

poor people who live from year to year in the district—they might colonize until the crows came home without effect. Sometimes it's necessary for them—in their own warped view of the matter—to pile up a bigger majority than usual, to make up, perhaps, for smaller votes in other regions. Then they show the ugly side of politics, and bring in their colonists. But if they were not already sure of their own normal, legitimate districts, what good would their colonists be to them? Colonization is a little superstructure of viciousness erected on a good, firm foundation of political assurance, based on human intercourse.

"And women," she asserted almost solemnly, "are, by nature and by training, more given to plain human intercourse than men; they are the real experts in neighborliness, or they may easily become such—it's merely following the line of least resistance for them to do it. It's merely returning to one of the virtues of a simpler period for them to become neighborly. So you see my original contention—the longer the suffrage victory is delayed, the greater the number of women who will come into the work; the more women who come into suffrage work, the more women who will come into political work when the ballot is won; and effective, successful political work rests in a democracy upon the human, warm quality of neighborliness. You transfer the power wielded by neighborliness from the hands of frequently corrupt bosses to the hands of frequently idealistic women, and what is going to happen?"

Before any one could answer with words that might have spoiled her conclusion, she hurried on herself.

"A revival of patriotism," she said. "A letting loose in the land of a great, unselfish, new force. By and by we shall see what democracy may really mean!"



The Heart of Montoduro

by

The Countess Barczyńska

Author of

"The Honey Pot," "The Little Mother Who Sits at Home," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. F. NONNAMAKER

A sparkling story of an unconventional young princess, and what happened to Mr. Parpor as a result of a wrongly addressed envelope.

WHY doesn't he give his name instead of initials, confound him!" observed Mr. Hamilton Parpor, as he addressed the envelope.

There was more than a touch of irritability in his tone. The open sheet of the *Times* incommoded him. It covered the inkstand and gave him but a few inches at the extreme end of the bureau on which to write. A finger of his left hand did its best to mark the advertisement he was answering. The slightest movement would land him among the miscellaneous advertisements, and that would mean another troublesome search down the closely printed columns. Under his writing hand the envelope moved insecurely

with his pen. Only once did he dare to take his eye from it to give a look at the clock on the mantelpiece.

In these momentous times, it behoved him to get to the foreign office with punctuality. Like all permanent officials, he had a strong suspicion that in his absence his chief *might* depart from traditional procedure, and so land the department in something indiscreet.

A very methodical and conscientious man was Mr. Parpor. You could see it in the nice appointment of his St. James Street flat, in the scrupulous polish of his good silk hat, in his gloves, his well-rolled umbrella—even in his spats. Mr. Parpor's spats were the envy of all his juniors. In spite of his forty years and a tendency to embonpoint, he was a personable gentleman. His appearance, no doubt, owed something to good service, but it was the duty as well as the business of a gentleman to be well turned out. He hoped the new "man" whose advertisement he had just answered would prove the

well-trained servant he deemed necessary to his comfort. The war had caused a dearth of good servants. It had claimed his own nearly indispensable man. Even the Athenæum—Mr. Parpor's club—was getting short-handed.

The gravity of the case, as well as the critical situation of the country—the burden of which Mr. Parpor, in a measure, felt to be upon his shoulders—showed in the solemnity with which he took his departure from the flat, in his measured tread down St. James Street, and in the deliberate way in which he consigned his letter—addressed to "C. M., Box 4735, The *Times* Office"—to the post. Impending issues in the Balkans, a "certain liveliness" in the wording of the last note from the United States, were not in Mr. Parpor's mind more portentous than the possibilities attending the engagement of a new "man."

After which, as the theater programs have it, a day and a night elapsed. Mr. Parpor, temporarily relieved of affairs of state, was once more at home. He sat in a luxurious armchair, absorbing a *Times* leading article. But he was oppressed by a sense of discomfort. Antoinette, his French cook, though wholly adequate in the kitchen department, lacked the qualities of a man. He missed the ministrations of a body servant.

The door opened and she came in.

"Some one to see m'sieur."

"Ah, yes," he rejoined. "The new man, I suppose. I'll see him in here."

"Pardon, m'sieur. It is not a man."

"Then who—"

"*Dieu sait!* But it is a *jeune fille*."

"A what?" ejaculated Mr. Parpor.

"What does she want?"

Before Antoinette could explain further, a briefly-skirted, black-legged apparition appeared in the doorway. Dark, curling hair tumbled over her shoulders. Her eyes matched her hair.

They had an expression of immense vivacity, tempered by something autocratic. She carried a parcel done up in brown paper. Antoinette retired. Mr. Parpor stared at the intruder.

"I have brought them," she said, proceeding to untie her parcel.

"Brought what? I don't understand. Haven't you come to the wrong flat?"

It was the girl's turn to look surprised.

"I have come in answer to your letter. See!"

She displayed a crumpled sheet of paper, on which Mr. Parpor recognized his own handwriting. He took it from her. It briefly requested "C. M." to call upon him in reference to the advertisement in the *Times*.

"How did this come into your hands?" he marveled. "I answered a footman's advertisement. I—I'm not wanting a girl messenger."

She gave a haughty toss of her curls.

"Then you are not Mr. Hamilton Parpor? And you do not want to buy jewels?" The words came fluently, but in a slightly foreign accent.

"Jewels? What for?"

She shrugged.

"For yourself, or your wife, or—it is all the same to me."

A light began to dawn on Mr. Parpor.

"One moment," he said. "I just want to look up something."

It was his habit to file recent copies of the *Times*. He consulted the one of the previous day's date, found the advertisement he thought he had answered, and read one in the adjoining column. It was also signed "C. M.," but with a different box number. The girl had come to his side and was looking over his shoulder.

"That's mine," she said, pointing.

"Owing to the war, a young lady of high position is compelled to sacrifice her jewels. Only private persons of good standing replied to."

"I suppose you meant to write to the



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other 'C. M.' the single-handed footman. It's a mix-up. What a nuisance! Then you don't want any jewels?"

Mr. Parpor looked her up and down in a puzzled way. It seemed extraordinary that a "young lady of high position" should be carting about jewels for sale.

"No, I—er—don't wear jewelry. A man—— It's not done, you know. Do you mind telling me who you are?"

"Christine Ekaterina Eugénie, Princesse de Montoduoro."

"Oh!" said Mr. Parpor blankly.

That very morning he had been wading through a long dispatch concerning Montoduoro, that remnant of a once powerful Balkan state, which stuck to its mountains, its princely titles, its semi-independence, and the memory of its past glories. A turbulent spot, he had called it. Slav in sentiment, but shackled to the Hapsburgs by force of circumstance, it impinged on two frontiers, over either of which it might throw a small, but extremely bellicose,

force. Its doubtful attitude was hampering the policy of the Quadruple Entente. And here, unaccountably enough, was a princess of that very state, with a wildcat story of jewels to sell—in his flat. Her presence might compromise him—the foreign office—the country itself.

Although no lover of fiction, Mr. Parpor was sufficiently insular to be biased by the English fictional conception of the foreign adventuress. True, his visitor was a girl, almost a child, but she might be older than she looked—dangerous: She was certainly of most attractive appearance. He must be circumspect.

"Of course, I don't wish to doubt your highness' statement," he said. "But how is it that you are in London? The blockade of the Austrian ports by the——"

"I didn't come that way."

"But by yourself?"

"Rather! Why not?"

"Well—of course——" stammered Mr. Parpor.

"Are you going to have tea?" asked the unconventional princess. "I'm fearfully hungry."

"Oh, certainly, certainly. I'll ring."

Mr. Parpor did so. Antoinette came in and received instructions.

"And hot toast and cake, please," augmented the princess.

"Your highness speaks English uncommonly well," observed Mr. Parpor.

"Don't I? I had an English governess. That's why I came to London. I always wanted to."

"You must surely have had difficulties in getting away, and on the journey," ventured Mr. Parpor.

"No end!" The princess took his own particular armchair and lolled back in a *déagé* manner. "I'll tell you all about it, if you like. Do you know, I'm rather glad of your mistake about the advertisement? I think this is an awfully jolly flat. Anyway, everything's

much better than the boarding house I'm staying at."

"Boarding house!"

"Yes. I was so short of money. Naturally, they don't know my real name. I call myself 'Miss Smith.'"

Antoinette came in with the tea. Christine Ekaterina Eugénie, Princesse of Montoduoro, turned her attention to it. Evidently life in a London boarding house had stimulated her appetite. She finished off all the hot toast and ate several of Antoinette's excellent cakes.

"I feel much better now. I shall come and have tea with you again," she said.

"I shall be delighted," replied Mr. Parpor. "You were going to explain about——"

"About escaping? Yes. You see, I hated Kraft so."

Mr. Parpor's mouth dropped.

"You mean?" he faltered.

"Prince Kraft zu Shachausen. I wasn't going to marry him. They wanted me to. I think he's a pig. They were beginning to be quite nasty about it; but I knew, if I did, we should have to fight on the side of Austria."

"I take it Prince Kraft came with promises from the emperor?"

"And from Berlin. Oh, yes. We were to have part of Herzegovina, right up to the Nereta. And autonomy!" she scoffed. "As if we hadn't always had it—practically."

"Quite so."

Mr. Parpor was getting wildly interested. What that last note concerning Montoduoro had *not* contained was this definite bribe of the central empires. To a man in his position, it was a veritable revelation. He tingled to acquaint his chief with it.

"So I borrowed a thousand francs from Maximilian—my uncle, the voivode, you know"—Mr. Parpor knew—"wrapped up all the jewelry I'd got, dressed myself in a suit of Leopold's

clothes—we're the same size—and bolted."

"But which way? I don't understand."

"By Cetinje and Scutari, and then down to the coast of Avlona with some gypsies. It was such fun! They—my people—were after me all the way, but they didn't catch me. At Avlona I found a Greek ship full of olive oil and currants and things. They wanted a cabin boy, so they took me. That's how I got to London, all the way by sea. It was awfully lucky, because, of course, I hadn't got a passport."

"But your clothes? Dressed as a boy—"

"Oh, that was easy. I went to a shop and said I wanted some things for my sister. It was a good shop, and I spent nearly all my money."

The admission brought Mr. Parpor back to realities. An escaped princess, living in a boarding house as Miss Smith, with jewels for sale, but without money, took some swallowing. It ought not to be difficult to identify the only daughter of the House of Montoduoro. In any event, funds ought to be found for an unprotected girl.

"Is there any one in London who knows you?" he asked.

"There's the Serbian *chargé d'affaires*, but he's a friend of father's, and he might—"

"Do you mind if I telephone him? Just to find out whether any inquiries are being made about you in Montoduoro?"

"Not if you promise you won't let him take me home."

"I promise," said Mr. Parpor, and went to the instrument.

Not only did the *chargé d'affaires* know the princess, but he described her. He also knew that she was in London, and her present address. He was making discreet inquiries there on behalf of her family. The real trouble about her was that she had gone off with the

historic Mohacz diamond, the fourth largest in Europe.

The information made the identification even more complete than Mr. Parpor cared about. For all he knew, the famous diamond was in the box on his table. A nice thing it would be if its present possessor had been traced to his flat! The discovery of the diamond there would compromise him—perhaps compromise the government! The Serbian *chargé d'affaires* was a man who overflowed with energy. Mr. Parpor became suddenly diplomatic.

"You must have money, of course, princess. Where is it to come from?"

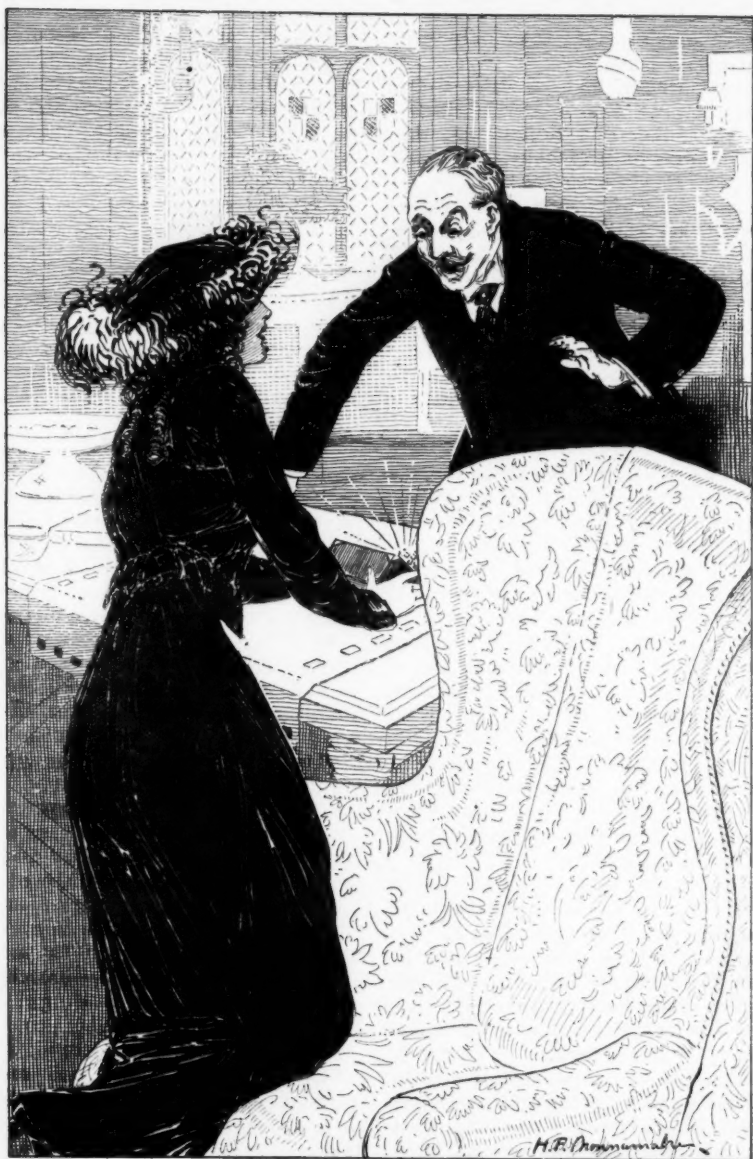
"The pawnbroker, I suppose," she replied carelessly. "I particularly didn't want to go to one. He would be sure to think I stole the jewels. That's why I advertised."

The tone was so frank, so palpably honest, that Mr. Parpor felt it discreditable in him to believe her capable of purloining the fourth largest diamond in Europe. Indeed, he was rather disinclined to believe in its existence.

"Suppose you show me your jewels," he suggested. "Perhaps, after all, I might be able to buy some of them."

"That would be lovely!" she cried, and untied the string that bound the brown-paper covering of the box.

An ordinary leather jewel case was disclosed. Mr. Parpor observed that it was unlocked. That rather disposed of the argument that it contained anything very valuable. Inside it everything was higgledy-piggledy—a seed-pearl necklace, pendants, brooches, bracelets, and rings that any girl of position and means might possess, mixed up with a string of coral, and another of amber, beads, and some gaudy enamels. The better to display them, she tipped the box over on to the table. There was a sudden blaze as if an electric torch had been switched on in the center of the heap of ornaments. Mr. Parpor stared and stared. It was



"The Mohacz!" she gurgled. "The Heart of Montoduro! And it's been lying about unlocked for weeks! Father would have a fit if he knew!"

the Mohacz diamond, after all, a many-faceted oval, the size of a large gooseberry, that scintillated colored fire in the afternoon sunlight.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, under his breath, and lifted his eyes to the girl's face.

It wore a puzzled look. The straight brows were puckered in bewilderment. Then her lips twitched, and a peal of laughter broke from them.

"The Mohacz!" she gurgled. "The Heart of Montoduoro! And it's been lying about unlocked for weeks and weeks! Father would have a fit if he knew!"

"But he *does* know!" declared Mr. Parpor, in a high-pitched voice. "He has told——" He broke off and looked anxiously at the door. "This is a terrible situation! Suppose the police were to come!"

"Oh, rubbish!" declared the princess. "Besides, I didn't know I had the stupid thing. It was dark when I opened Aunt Sophia's safe and took the things out. She shouldn't have put it among my jewelry. I can't help her mistakes. Considering it was she who was always so keen on my marrying Kraft, it's a judgment on her. Her life won't be worth living now. I expect father will have her locked up. You don't know what a lot they think of that silly diamond in Montoduoro."

Mr. Parpor began walking up and down the room, wondering what he ought to do. He was fearfully perplexed. To leave a diamond nearly as valuable as the Koh-i-noor in the possession of a mere girl—and such a careless one as this—would be to tempt fate. To keep it himself in safety for her was out of the question. He might be had up as a receiver of stolen property. To hand it over to the police or to the Serbian chargé d'affaires was a responsibility he was not prepared to take. They were a hot-headed lot in Montoduoro.

The princess' voice startled him out of his uncomfortable reverie.

"I can see what you're thinking about," she said. "You're afraid it will get lost. Can't you take care of it for me?"

"Heavens, no!"

"Not if I stay with it?"

"What? Here?" he asked incredulously.

"Yes, why not? That is, if you wouldn't mind. I can be very good company." Her eyes wandered over the pleasant room appreciatively, and then back to his face. "I think you're rather nice. We should probably get on like a house on fire."

"But, my dear young lady——" he protested.

"I'm a princess," she cut in, with much dignity. "I shall exercise my princely prerogative. I invite myself to stay with you, Mr. Parpor." A mischievous twitch flickered over her lips. "I shall call you 'Pa' for short."

Mr. Parpor gasped.

"And I have another idea," she went on vivaciously. "The diamond will be a—what do you call it when you keep something belonging to somebody else to prevent them getting the best of you?"

"Do you mean a hostage?"

"A hostage—that's it. I shall stick to the Mohacz until father gives me a binding promise that I'm not to be fetched back."

"But why do you want to stay in England? If it's only because of Prince Kraft, you could easily——"

"Yes, I know. But I want to marry the Prince of Wales."

Mr. Parpor held his breath.

"He looks such a dear in khaki!" she declared enthusiastically. "He's home on leave, I hear. I wish I knew him. Do you?"

"I—I have been presented, but——"

"You do move in court circles, then?"

"No, I'm a government official," stammered Mr. Parpor. "In the foreign office."

"Oh, that's nearly the same thing. How splendid! You'll be able to arrange it. I'm afraid I'm rather young. Still, one isn't fifteen forever." For the first time during the amazing interview, the princess showed embarrassment. A soft pink suffused her cheeks. "You could take him the Heart of Montoduoro to show him that I—that I——"

Her hesitation did a little toward restoring Mr. Parpor's capacity for thought. Her various suggestions had staggered him. He began thinking furiously. If the diamond could be used as a hostage and a love philter, could it not equally well be employed diplomatically? It was the most precious thing in, or, rather, out of, Montoduoro. To get it back, the princess' father would be ready to agree to the most exacting terms. He might be pinned down to help bar the German advance with his hordes of *bashibazouks*. It would be a great score for his chief. Mr. Parpor looked at his watch. It was not too late to catch him. He would cut across the park to the F. O. But meanwhile what about the princess and her diamond?

"Well, I don't know," he rejoined ponderously, and felt himself a very Machiavelli. "The opportunity to do as you wish might arise. Meantime, it is essential to find a place of safety for the diamond. It is too late to put it in the bank."

"I don't think I care about a bank," said Christine Ekaterina Eugénie. "A bomb might drop on it. I think I'd better stick to it, now I've got it."

For a moment, Mr. Parpor saw his precious plan shattered.

"I'll keep it under my pillow. As I'm going to stay, it will be quite safe there. May I ring for a maid to show me my room?"

Mr. Parpor saved her the trouble. Of course, it was all very unconventional, but the peculiar circumstances warranted the waiving of social rules. When Antoinette came in, he consigned the princess to her care. The moment he heard the spare-bedroom door shut, he went cautiously into the hall, put on his hat, and silently let himself out of the flat. In the street, he hailed a taxi and told the man to drive fast. Five minutes later he was closeted with his chief. What he told him instantly set the wires humming over southeastern Europe. Athens took up a code message and passed it on to Saloniki. Saloniki flung it across the Balkan ranges.

But Mr. Parpor did not stay for developments. After congratulations on his political acumen from his chief, he was sent back and told to keep a vigilant eye on his two precious *trouvailles*, human and mineral. Their acquisition might turn the scale in the near-eastern theater of war.

At dinner that night—a delicate repast, in the cooking of which Antoinette surpassed herself—Christine Ekaterina Eugénie of Montoduoro was in boisterous spirits.

"I've thought of a splendid way to get money without selling my jewelry," she informed Mr. Parpor. "While you were out, I was reading the newspaper. It says there that Madame Tussaud offers a hundred pounds to anybody who will sleep a night in the Chamber of Horrors."

"But," he faltered, "you don't propose——"

"Why not? I'm not afraid."

"It's a horrible idea!" He shuddered.

"Poof!" went the princess. "You can see more horrors in daylight in Montoduoro than anywhere in London in the dark."

"But—but you won't want money,"

he protested. "The fact is, princess, I have interested the government in your—er—predicament, I think—" He stopped at the tinkle of the telephone. "There it is! Will you excuse me?"

The princess nodded, and Mr. Parpor went to the instrument. The message was a long one. As he listened, his face showed extreme gratification. Many times he said: "Thanks, sir," "Yes," and "Certainly." Once only did he look perturbed, and repeated the word "Guardian!" in a tone of dismay. But immediately afterward he seemed to be reassured, for he hung up the receiver and came back to the table, rubbing his hands.

"The C. B.!" he breathed. "The one distinction I—"

"What is that—the C. B.?" inquired Christine Ekaterina Eugénie.

"The Bath—the Companionship of the Bath!" gloated Mr. Parpor. "I really think the occasion warrants the opening of a bottle of champagne, princess."

"What? To wash in?" she exclaimed.

"Listen. I'll explain," he said, and began a carefully censored summary of what had just been communicated to him over the telephone by the F. O.

"It appears that the prince, your father, is aware of your arrival in London—"

"How? Who told him?" she demanded.

"The Serbian *chargé d'affaires*, I believe," answered Mr. Parpor, thus evading his own share in her betrayal. "Go on."

"And his highness is so relieved to know of your safety"—here the princess made a skeptical *moue*—"that he has agreed not to run counter to your wish to remain in England. One condition, however, he imposes."

"What is it?"

"That the Mohacz diamond is placed

in the hands of the British government for safe-keeping."

The princess nodded acquiescence.

"I don't mind that a bit. I'll send it to the Prince of Wales by parcel post."

Mr. Parpor discreetly forbore to pursue the point.

"His highness meanwhile has done me the honor to appoint me as your guardian," he continued.

"I've as good as appointed you myself. Anything else?"

"Nothing very much. It is suggested that I place you under the care of a lady. I have no doubt I can prevail on my sister, Lady Welwyn, to give you hospitality."

"Lady Whirlwind! I like that name!" mused the princess.

"And that I engage a good English governess for you."

"We'll do that together," said she decisively.

"You will be glad to hear that the prince, your father, has decided to join the Allied cause. Indeed, I think I may go so far as to say that at the present moment the Montoduorian forces are fighting on our side," added Mr. Parpor, with unconcealed satisfaction.

"Hooray!" cried the princess, vigorously clapping her hands. "I *do* hope they'll kill Kraft. Then Aunt Sophia won't mind me marrying—"

"Here's the champagne," hurriedly interjected Mr. Parpor, as Antoinette entered with the bottle. "We must drink a toast, princess—"

"England and Montoduoro!" shrilled Christine Ekaterina Eugénie.

"Montoduoro and England!" iterated Mr. Parpor, raising his glass. "And a wrongly addressed envelope," he added to himself.

A week later, Mr. Parpor's new man brought him a letter. It was in a characteristically tumultuous handwriting

that vaguely reminded him of Christine Ekaterina Eugénie's hair.

OVERTON TOWERS, *Nighton, Glos.*

DEAR MR. PAR: It's awfully jolly here. I get on splendidly with Lady Whirlwind, and my governess is all right. We do a lot of English history, especially the conquest of Wales. I read he—you know who—was in the trenches the other day. Isn't he splendid?

I hope the diamond is all right.

We are doing our little bit in Montoduoro now, aren't we?

I've written to father to say you are to

have the *Toison d'Or*, first class. It rhymes just right with your name.

Mr. Parpor

Got the *Toison d'Or*

And the great C. B.,

All through Eugénie!

Your sincere friend,

CHRISTINE EKATERINA EUGENIE.

The C. B. and the *Toison d'Or*! Mr. Parpor beamed. He had nothing further to ask of fortune. Whatever the mistakes of other men in the government service, he, at least, had earned his honors!



SAVING THE BABIES

EVERYBODY is out saving babies nowadays, even those who are little more than babies themselves. This is one of the most hopeful things about the baby-saving campaign, for if you only "catch them young enough," there is a chance that your precepts will stick. The grown-up mothers are poor and tired and ignorant; the "little mothers" of to-day will, for the most part, be poor and tired, too, when they grow up, but they will have knowledge and a standard of living far in advance of their parents, and this will arouse in them that divine discontent with their poverty and their weariness which is the beginning of better things.

How enthusiastically the children respond to the special lectures given them every year by board-of-health physicians, who tell them how to bathe, dress, feed, and otherwise care for the baby, is shown by the delightful compositions they write on the subject.

One day as I was walking in the street, I saw a baby in a carriage fast asleep with a nipple and a empty bottle in its mouth. So I saw the mother from the child and I told her nipples is a real death for a child. When the baby is having its sleep, the nipple should be in a glass of borax water ready for its meal. The mother from that child thanked me very much.

One day I walked in the street, and I saw a woman giving a baby a lolypop which had been sucked some time by her elder son. I went over and told her that lolypops or any such food was the same as giving the child some poison. She asked me how I know, and I told her I had learned at the Little Mothers' League. She took the subject under consideration and threw the lolypop away.

Perhaps the next generation will go even a step farther than this. An enlightened motherhood would soon realize that the little mothers are stealing from their own strength and development much of the care they give to the babies. We will then begin saving the older children as well. Where would this end? Nowhere, let us hope. A humanity-saving campaign would have an absolutely unlimited field of action. It would have to cope with disease and poverty and ignorance and the greed for profits as expressed in a thousand different ways—in child labor, in low wages, in cheap and vicious amusements.

The baby-saving campaign is but the small beginning of great things.

Salome

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "The Stabilizer," "A Sheaf of New Leaves," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

A tender and appealing story of the great war's touch on the happiness that blazed for a little day in a house in far-away New England.

WHEN the emperors and the great lords sat in the council chambers, with the maps of the world unrolled before them, and declared that for this realm and that of their greed and desire they would spread ruin through a hundred realms as fair, they never thought of Durhamton. How should they? They had never heard of it, lying serene and stately upon its hilltop. And when they decreed that, because their names must be blazoned in purple and gold upon the indifferent page of history, there must be millions of nameless graves, no breeze from the west murmured to them of Filippo and Salome, no Occidental star sent a beam through their council-chamber curtains to stir them with faint, pitiful unrest because of lovers parted for a cause in which they had no part.

For if the emperors and the great lords, in their thick-curtained council chambers, were accessible to all the multitudinous premonitions of woe, vain would be the whispers of glory and aggrandizement; and young lovers and young mothers might walk the flowering paths of earth with no greater dread upon them than earth's invisible rulers impose. And Salome, in the old gray house on the Durhamton Road— But that is the end of Salome's story, not the beginning.

She was coming up out of the cellar, a pan of milk held steadily in her two outstretched hands, when her father drove into the yard. She did not raise her eyes until she attained the level turf at the head of the cellar steps; for carrying a full milk pan is a delicate job, demanding all the attention and care of the bearer. Once secure, however, she looked up to call a greeting to Abner Harrington. But the greeting died upon her lips, although the smile of welcome and affection was transfixed there, for it was not into her father's grizzled face that she looked, but into the brown eyes of a stranger.

It was a March afternoon, and the sun, weary of the sullen caprices of the day, had suddenly declared himself, thrusting violently through the clouds in the west. Out of a torn sky, all red and gold and stormy gray, beams of light flashed straight between the gray barn and the gray ice house and played about the strange youth's head and shoulders. He was aureoled in light, and the sight of him and of the sunset, after the dark of the cellar, was blinding to Salome. She caught her breath, and stared with dilated eyes, and the strange youth stared back, for what seemed to them both a long time. It was only a second or two, however, measured by the common timepieces of the world. Then Filippo jumped from



"I'll keep him filled up," Filippo promised, and Salome looked at him as if he had promised her the earth and the kingdoms thereof.

the seat of the big wagon, loaded with grain bags, and spoke:

"I am your new hired man. Your papa, he hire me. He get off at Mr. Peter Harrington's. He come soon."

"Oh, Uncle Peter's?" said Salome vaguely. Then she recovered herself; the sound of her own voice, the sound of a familiar name, broke the blinding, dizzying spell woven of the sunset-shot air and the smiling brown eyes of the stranger. "You know where to drive the wagon?" she asked. "Straight in through that door." She nodded toward the great barn. "You'll see where the grain is to be stored."

"Yes," answered the young man. The single syllable was music on his lips.

It was a caress. His eyes still dwelt lightly upon her, and she felt, for a moment, that it was their splendor that clothed her in a radiance, and not that of the westering sun. Then he went on: "My name is Filippo—Filippo Sebastiano."

"Filippo Sebastiano," repeated Salome. The words were musical. She said them again: "Filippo Sebastiano." Then the sun went down behind the purple shoulder of a distant hill, and the world became normal once more. Salome resumed her usual self. "We'll probably call you 'Philip,'" she remarked, taking her way toward the kitchen door. "Father doesn't like foreign names."

"Philip, if you like it," said Filippo, and Salome's heart skipped a beat. There was something curiously disturbing in the faint accent of the "you." Or had he accented it, after all? Or was she just crazy?

Her mother, tall, spare, and as erect as one of the poplars that lined the drive, sat knitting in a straight-backed chair by the window. She wanted to know who the stranger was.

"Filippo Sebastiano," answered Salome, with a tender dwelling upon the vowels.

"What?" said Mrs. Harrington sharply.

"Father's new hired man," explained Salome, skimming the yellow cream from the top of the pan into a blue-and-white pitcher.

"Another furriner!" exclaimed her mother despairingly. "After that Kirlafy crowd!"

"They were hunkies," said Salome.

"Well, I never knew yet that dagos was any better than hunkies," said the older lady snappishly. "What's that you're doin' with egg?"

"I thought I'd stir up some muffins for supper," Salome replied.

"With eggs sellin' for forty cents an' the hens gone on a strike? What's got into you, S'lome Harrington? Jest you put that away in the cold pantry for Thursday's cake bakin', an' make soda biscuit for supper, the same's I told you."

"Ah, mother!" wheedled Salome. She crossed to the straight-backed chair and leaned down upon its uncompromising wooden strip. "Ah, mother!" She brought her face down close to Mrs. Harrington's—a face brown and pink and delicately powdered across the bridge of the straight little nose with freckles; a face with eyes as blue as a bright October sky; a face framed in warm, golden-brown hair that curled gladly about the white, candid brow and the little ears and the white, pillared

neck rising straight and proud from the collarless blue gingham frock.

"Oh, well, then," yielded Mrs. Harrington weakly. She stiffened beneath the touch of the girl's hands, beneath the pressure of the soft cheek against her own. "But it's a crime, with eggs what they are."

No one knew how dear to her was her girl's little demonstrative outbreaks, or how she fought within herself over the sin of finding them dear. She differed from one of her Puritan ancestresses of the witchcraft days, not in regarding the human affections as less sinful, but merely in her inability so rigidly to control their expression. She suspected sometimes, in the long night watches of the insomniac, that she was courting hell fires by the weakness of her adoration for the lovely child of her flesh; and then, sometimes, when a daytime glimpse of the girl filled her heart to bursting with pride and love, she defied the grim Puritan Providence of her imagination, and told Him that she was willing to take hell fire for the joy she knew in Salome.

But where had the girl acquired that outgiving nature, that pretty impulsiveness and playfulness? And whither would they lead her? With these problems she wrestled at night. They did not particularly interest Abner, whose mind was fixed upon his acres, and who accepted Salome with no more questioning—and but little more perception—than that with which he accepted the beauty of May.

The sound of the egg beater whisking merrily made music in the kitchen, but Salome added her voice in song—sacred song, which was the only kind she knew:

"The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain.
His blood-red banner streams afar—
Who follows in His train?"

The oven door slammed upon the last

syllable, Salome testing its heat with experienced hand.

"Salome!" rebuked her mother. "Should think you'd know better than to sing a hymn like it was a dance tune!"

"All right. I'll sing it like a dirge," promised Salome blithely, and forthwith drawled lugubriously:

"Who—best—can—drink—his—cup—of—
woe—

Tri-umph—ant—o-ver pain—
Who pa-tient—bears—his cross—be-low—
He—fol-lows—in—His—train."

The door from the woodshed opened. Filippo stood there, with a great armful of wood. Mrs. Harrington's "S'lome, it's a pity you're too big for spankin', for that's what you need, makin' fun of—" died away. She looked at the smiling brown-eyed boy in the doorway.

"The woodbox's behind the stove," she told him.

He piled his burden in it, carefully avoiding clatter.

"Thank you," said Salome.

"I'll keep him filled up," Filippo promised, and Salome looked at him as if he had promised her the earth and the kingdoms thereof, while Mrs. Harrington observed that, if he did, he'd be the first man in her experience to do so.

"You'd think cookin' an' washin' could be done on a cold stove," she scolded, "the way the men all act when you mention the woodbox. But they're all keen set enough on their virtuls, I notice."

Filippo's smile indicated appreciation of this wit, and a pleasant sense of the shortcomings of his sex.

"But now you got me," he said, with a little humorous vanity accenting the first personal pronoun.

Mrs. Harrington looked at him sharply. His eyes were on Salome, smiling upon him from beside the range.

"I hope that boy don't mean to talk

an' act fresh," said the mother, when Filippo had left the room, and when a double shadow crossing the window gave notice that Abner himself had arrived to instruct his new hand in the minutiae of his duties.

"Fresh!" exclaimed Salome, astonished. "Why, mother, he was just—just—friendly."

"Now, don't you go to work spoilin' him, like you did Uncle Si," warned Mrs. Harrington. "You can't treat hired help like real folks; they take advantage of it—an' this boy's a furriner, besides."

Salome, slicing ham with deft, accurate motions of her thin-bladed knife, surreptitiously adding a spoonful of cream to the dish of creamed potatoes warmed over from dinner, opening a fresh jar of green-tomato pickle, pulling the dining table out into the middle of the floor, and setting it with the blue willowware that had been in the Harrington family since they had come over with the regicides—Salome, slender and fair as a flame, busy as a bird at nesting time, flushed at her mother's disparaging tone.

"I think," she remarked, with a sudden and unexpected accession of democratic spirit, "that it's horrid to call people who work for you 'hired help.' I—I think they ought to have some better name—like clerks in stores, and all."

"I've always thought myself that 'help' didn't suit the most of them," answered Mrs. Harrington grimly. "But there's no question about their bein' hired, whatever else they may be or may not be. Don't you get notional, S'lome. There! Your father's showin' the new boy— What did you say his name was? Filippo? He's showin' him the shed pump—I hear him. They'll be in to supper as soon as they've washed up. Why, S'lome Harrington! If you ain't cut the layer cake! Cookies would have done. I don't know what's got into you!"



Salome sat entranced. And by and by he began to sing, softly, sweetly, in the unknown liquid tongue.

Neither did Salome know. She only knew that since she had come slowly up the cellar steps into the blaze of light across the western hills, the day had grown into a festival, and that all festival rites were fitting.

After supper, in the warm kitchen, Salome washed the dishes, while the men went out again on after-supper chores and her mother knitted interminably. But when she had the last blue cup and saucer again in its place in the kitchen dresser, and the red cloth had converted the table into a sitting-room accessory, they came in again, harness in their hands.

"Harness ain't been oiled in a dog's

age," said Abner. "Me an' Filippo might as well be doin' that as nothin'."

"You'll not mind the smell of the leather?" Filippo besought Salome. She laughed in derision of the over-fastidious idea. "When your kitchen smells so sweet," he explained. He pointed to the rows of plants arranged on a sort of flight of steps in the south window—geraniums red and white, lemon verbenas, and dusky heliotrope. "In my land," he added, touching the bright blossoms of the geraniums and the heliotrope, "these grow big—so big." He raised his hand toward the window top. "Big like your lilacs."

Salome stared at him, enraptured.

"I wish you could see them," he told her earnestly.

"I wish I could," she answered as earnestly.

They spoke as if something important had been said.

The custom in the Harrington household was for its members to spend the evenings rather silently. Abner usually brought some piece of tinkering to the kitchen stove and occupied himself with it; Mrs. Harrington always knitted; Salome generally read a book from the Durhamton library, or crocheted yards of edging. There was nothing particularly forbidding in the silence; it was that of friendly, understanding folk with no greater impulse toward a waste of words than toward any other form of extravagance. Salome had been brought up in the habit of quietude, and it had never occurred to her to find it dull. But to-night was wonderful. As Filippo's lithe, strong brown hands worked over the leather bits, his tongue wagged constantly. He told about his home, and picture after picture was unrolled before the girl's vision—the pop-pied campagna, the old aqueducts, castles, and huts, the dim churches and bright festas.

"I—I come from Rome!" proclaimed Filippo proudly. "Many Italians in this country are from Naples or from Sicily—rough men! But I am a Roman, and my Uncle Gregorio—you know Gregorio Sebastiano, the mason, Mr. Harrington?—he is a Roman."

"Waal," said Abner Harrington, "I guess you're all glad enough to come out here, whether you're from Rome or Naples. Your uncle, he's done fust rate for himself, hain't he?"

Filippo agreed that his uncle had, indeed, done very well in America. Among other things, he had married him an American wife.

"So he will go home no more," sighed Filippo. "He is now—what you call it?

—a voter. Yes, he is an American citizen."

"Ain't you goin' to take out naturalization papers yourself?" asked Abner severely.

Filippo laughed.

"Yesterday I think no," he replied. "I think this country"—he shivered spectacularly—"cold—gray. No flower, no sun, no music, nothing but to build for my uncle, and, when there is no more work at building, to plant in the cold, hard ground and pray that the seeds may sprout. But to-day—I don't know." He looked at Salome's blossoming shelf. Then he looked with eyes half mischievous, half pleading, toward her. "To-day, I do not know. There are some flowers. Maybe there will be music and sunlight by and by." Then his glance lit upon a hook above the vegetable table against the side wall. A fiddle hung there. He gave an exclamation. "But there is music, too! Who plays it?"

It was explained to him that no one played the fiddle—that it had been left there by a ne'er-do-well of a "hired man," who had had the impertinence to die of pneumonia upon Abner Harrington's hands, a year back. Filippo dropped his straps and buckles and took the fiddle from the wall. He sounded chords, he tightened strings, he sighed over the condition in which dust and weather had left the instrument. But at the end he produced a piece of rosin from his pocket, used it plentifully on the bow, and began to play. Salome sat entranced. Even Mrs. Harrington relaxed an inch or two from her rigidity; and by and by he began to sing, softly, sweetly, in the unknown, liquid tongue, his dark eyes fixed upon Salome across the brown wood from which he had drawn such harmonies.

"I don't see that you're gettin' any forrader with the harness, Filippo," Abner reproved him, after a while, and, with a laugh, the boy restored the instrument to its place upon the wall and

went on rubbing the harness with grease-soaked waste. And then he and Abner lit a lantern and went out for a final look at the stock, and Mrs. Harrington rolled her knitting into a firm ball and stabbed it deep with knitting pins, and remarked to her dreaming daughter:

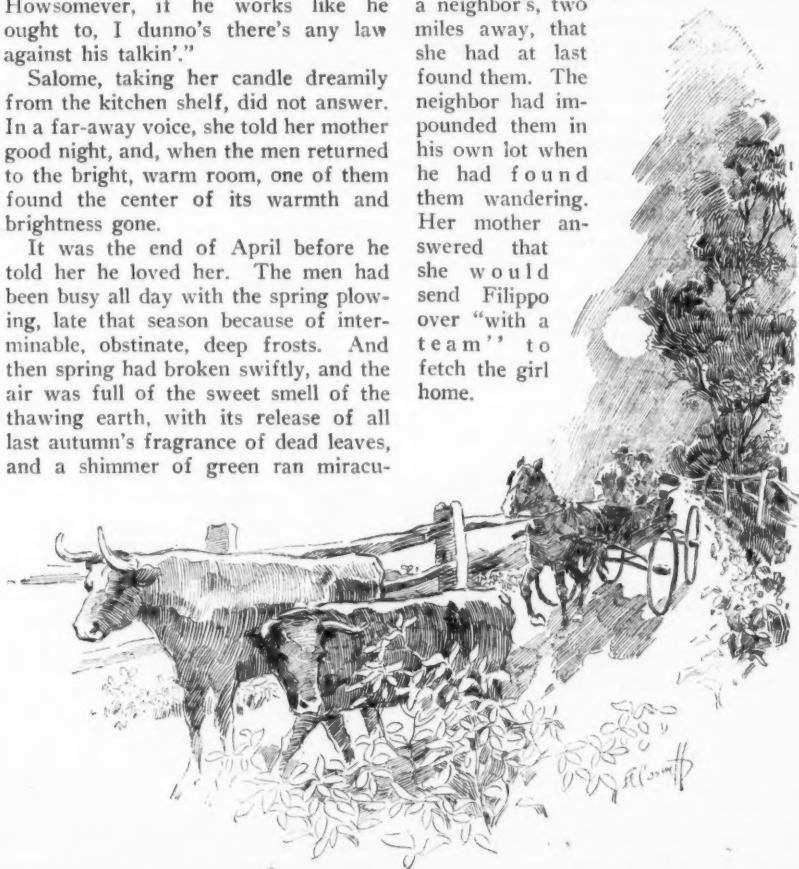
"You goin' to set there all night, Salome? It's past bedtime. He's got enough to say for himself, that new fellow your father's picked up, ain't he? Howsomever, if he works like he ought to, I dunno's there's any law against his talkin'."

Salome, taking her candle dreamily from the kitchen shelf, did not answer. In a far-away voice, she told her mother good night, and, when the men returned to the bright, warm room, one of them found the center of its warmth and brightness gone.

It was the end of April before he told her he loved her. The men had been busy all day with the spring plowing, late that season because of interminable, obstinate, deep frosts. And then spring had broken swiftly, and the air was full of the sweet smell of the thawing earth, with its release of all last autumn's fragrance of dead leaves, and a shimmer of green ran miracu-

lously across the pastures, and the willows swelled with buds. And through the pasture bars, mysteriously left down, Abner's herd went straying while Abner and Filippo worked preparing the big south field for corn.

Salome had volunteered to drive the cows up to the barnyard at milking time, and when she found them gone, and the bars down, she went out into the road seeking them. It was a long search, and finally she telephoned from a neighbor's, two miles away, that she had at last found them. The neighbor had impounded them in his own lot when he had found them wandering. Her mother answered that she would send Filippo over "with a team" to fetch the girl home.



And Salome and Filippo, who had never before been alone together for more than five or ten minutes, drove through the dusk, thrillingly conscious of each other.

It was dusk when they started, but a tenderly warm, caressing dusk. The west was wanly pink, and above the pale glow a silver star throbbed. The cows went slowly along the highroad in front of the buggy, their big bodies moving almost rhythmically from side to side, the bell of the leader sounding its single note at the head of the flock. And Salome and Filippo, who had never before been alone together for more than five or ten minutes, drove through the dusk, thrillingly conscious of each other—of the curves of each other's cheeks, pearly in the twilight, of the music of each other's broken young voices. They talked common-places—of the state of the ground in which he had been plowing, of the condition of the sick heifer, of the possibility of another frost; and then there fell silence between them, and in that silence Salome began to hum softly one of the airs he played each night upon the old fiddle.

"What are the words?" she asked him.

He said some words in Italian.

"Ah, but I don't know what they mean. Translate them to me."

"They mean: 'I know a cave where the sea is quiet, where the waves make no roar of battle, only a whisper of love. I know a cave where the darkness embraces one like the arms of a lover; and at the portal of the cave a rose signals when an intruder draws nigh; and through the crevice in its roof the sky shines silver and blesses our love, and one star laughs in tune with our joy. Beloved——'"

And then, suddenly, he could not go on with his translation, for she was trembling by his side, and he began to tremble, too; and then he put his arms around her and whispered brokenly:

"Oh, Salome! Salome!"

And against the unstained purity of her cheek she felt a boyish kiss, as virginal as the kiss she gave him.

II.

She told herself, when the scene was over, and when Filippo had taken himself—looking taller than she had known him, and whiter than she had dreamed his brown skin could show—out of the farmhouse and "off the place"—she told herself that of course she had known it must be so. Of course Abner Harrington was not going to allow his daughter to marry a hired hand, and a foreigner, at that! Of course not! Great-great-grandfather Harrington's Revolutionary musket still swung above the mantelshef of the best room; great-great-grandmother's pink-luster tea set, standing for more than a century and a quarter in the corner cupboard of the same austere and chilly room, would have disintegrated at such an alliance! And of course, *of course*, the daughter of Abner Harrington's wife would never be allowed to marry a Papist! Of course, of course, she had known it. She *must* have known it—else how could she see it so clearly now?

Yet she had come home the night before full of joy, full of expectation, agitated, but fearless, tremulous, but tremulous with happiness. In the world that had burst into star-smitten bloom and melody there had been no room for ugliness and discord, and she had had that sweet, thrilling delusion all the night. She had asked Filippo to keep their secret until morning only from shy, maidenly desire to pour out her full heart first to her mother. She had suddenly understood that her mother loved her; they would have together that shining, shy, miraculous moment.

But when she had murmured her first broken words, her mother had risen, horrified.

"S'lome! A Romanist! A Papist!" she had cried; and then, in a voice of abysmal shame: "Your father's hired hand!"

Of course, of course! Salome saw

it clearly enough now. There had been no miracle. The earth was not changed, not made over into a flowering, shining paradise, as fair as the one about which the hymns told—a garden lit by love, blooming with kindnesses and services, laid out with pretty little paths of humility and order.

Then she closed her eyes, and the pain of the world and the pain of loss faded. She no longer suffered because her mother, concerning whom she had had that marvelous intuition of love, did not understand, did not care about, her dream of happiness. She no longer suffered because Filippo had been driven from her father's place as a stray cur might have been driven; for, with her eyes closed, everything faded away from her consciousness except that wonderful moment when his arms had been about her, his lips against her cheek, when his voice had broken with tenderness over her name. Salome knew then, though she did not know that she knew it, all the wise philosophers have to say about eternity—that moment in the march of time when all other moments cease to be.

She understood nothing of the art and practice of disobedience. She had never wanted to be disobedient since she had been a tiny child, lightly desirous of forbidden jam. Life had flowed on so simply, so unhurriedly, so unhamperedly, since then. Her desires had been so sanely born of her environment, her duties had mated so sanely with her ambitions, she had taken the universe so much for granted as a force beneficent and silent as her parents, that rebellion was not in her vocabulary. Filippo could not teach it to her. His notes, delivered each morning for a week at the letter box at the corner, where the rural mail went by, made her weak with happiness and grief—happiness because his hands had touched the paper that she held, happiness that he loved her, and grief that

they were separated—but they could not make to grow in the kindly soil of her nature the seeds of hatred and defiance. She could become thin and pale, and the blue eyes could dilate to wondrous size in the diminished face, but she could not do any of the things he entreated her to do—she could not meet him in defiance of her parents' will, she could not run away and marry him and go to live in the household of the Uncle Gregorio who had also married him an American wife. She could only droop at home.

Then, one day, driving through the village with her parents, she saw him. It was after six weeks had passed over their separation, a fair June day, full of the scent of roses from all the gardens set behind the prim, concealing hedges of Durhamton; and at the sight of him, taking his noonday rest with other laborers from the house on which Uncle Gregorio was doing the masonry, a little cry burst from her lips. For he was more changed by the six weeks of wretchedness than even she. He who had been so merry, who had taught her the meaning of gayety, sat apart from his fellows, moody and pale. The little interval of time had aged him five years. It was not a boy who happened to push back his hat as the wagon rolled by and to raise his miserable, burning eyes to her face; it was a man who had suffered. And all the mothering kindness of all the race of women grieving for their children's pains rose up in her and broke from her in a little sobbing sound. Her father, with a growl at his horses, trotted them by swiftly, but, turning at the corner, she looked backward and saw Filippo standing in the road looking after her; and her heart supplied the look of woe upon her face and she wept softly.

Why, her parents asked themselves exasperatedly and gloomily, should she have fallen in love with the black-browed foreign boy when the country-



By the time he carried her down, the sound of the roaring fire filled the house.

side was full of perfectly presentable young men to whom no exception could be taken—young men whose ancestors had held farms before them, young men who attended the same church as the Harringtons, young men whose great-great-grandfathers also had fought in the Revolution? In the name of all that was reasonable and sane, why should she have been bewitched by a poor immigrant boy, with never an acre to match the two hundred that would be hers, never a cow to match the stately herds she would inherit, never a dollar in the bank to match her little store of bonds? How was it possible for her to have such low tastes? A hired hand!

A Romanist! A penniless adventurer from the land that meant to Abner and his wife nothing but garlic, cheap labor, and a dimly understood institution called the Black Hand.

Salome could not have told them what magic he had practiced. She did not know. She did not define it in terms of his youth and his beauty, his merry ways, his songs, his voluble talk, his gift of making every day a festival. No more than any other human being first smitten by the great sword of love and destiny, could she have told why it was to him and not to another that her being yearned.

She pined, as if she had been a lady

of romance and not a farm girl on the hills outside of Durhamton. The long nights were sleepless; when the moon whitened the fields and the valleys, she would rise and sit beside her window, not thinking, not planning, not hoping—only suffering mutely. And one night, when the autumn had begun to dismantle the trees of their leaves, she saw a figure pacing on the other side of the poplar drive. It was he—she knew it; and all the dumb pain of months fell away from her. She dropped to her knees beside the window sill and watched him. She gave no sign—that would have been a disobedience—but she felt the tides of life welling up within her again.

When, after he had heard through the stillness the bell of the Durhamton village clock strike twelve, he gave one long look at her window and turned away for his six-mile tramp back to town, she rose from her knees and crawled into bed, there to fall asleep as deeply and as dreamlessly as a child in its mother's arms. And the next day Mrs. Harrington told Abner, with a look of hope in her drawn face, that she believed Salome was "beginnin' to get over it."

So it might have gone on forever, if life ever continued in the same course long. But one night in November, something happened. Abner had given permission to a party of hunters from a near-by city to shoot in his woods. They had come by automobile, a somewhat noisy party of provincial "sports," and they had run their machine into Abner's big barn. All day long and far into the night, the air had echoed to the plop-plop of their shotguns and the baying of their dogs. Then, the wind rising, no sounds were heard but its surge through the pine tree in the corner by the kitchen ell and the creaking of the stout timbers on which the old house was built.

As Filippo told it afterward, it was

not the sound of the explosion that first startled him in his windy vigil, but the strong, inexplicable odor of gasoline. And then, while he still sniffed at the gust and looked inquiringly at the night, a roaring sheet of flame issued suddenly from the hayloft of the barn. On the wings of the mighty wind, it was borne to the shed roof. He said he gave a cry, but it was lost in the roar of wind and of flame. He beat against the doors; he called and called again; and finally, with an ax opportunely left out in the yard, he broke down the kitchen door. He roused Abner and his wife as he rushed to Salome's chamber. By the time he carried her down, the sound of the roaring fire filled the house.

He worked like ten men. He kept his wits about him. Neighbors, summoned before the telephone had been disconnected by the fire, came running and driving and riding. Automobiles snorted up through the night. Bucket brigades were formed. Filippo, as sure upon the ridgepole of the main house as in a rocking-chair, played a hose incessantly upon the shed roof. Some one investigated the burning barn, and dragged out the unconscious figure of one of the sportsmen, who, wearying of the hunt, had returned and, essaying a quiet smoke, had dropped from alcoholic, tremulous fingers a lighted match into the pool of gasoline a-leak upon the uneven barn floor.

Salome, making coffee for the fire fighters on her Uncle Peter Harrington's stove, down the road, sang hosannas of gladness. Her love had proved itself justified—her lover was saving her father's property, had saved her father's life! Those awful, all-devouring flames would destroy misunderstanding and hatred. All dross would be burned away in them, and the great things would stand out again, clear, unmistakable—love and truth, service and gladness.

But when the fire had been controlled, and the wind had died down to a little murmur; when the neighbors' little cars had snorted out of the yard and out of the road; when the old horses had been whipped away from the place, toward morning oats in their own barns; when what remained of the Abner Harrington place was left to the Abner Harringtons and to Filippo, they looked—the father and mother—at each other with grim, ugly inquiry, and then at the youth, soot-blackened, bruised, elate, and the inquiry that was in their eyes they put to him.

"You damned dago, you!" cried Abner Harrington, who, as a church member of high standing, was seldom caught using profanity. "What were you doin' on my place at midnight?"

Filippo looked at him with amazement. Mrs. Harrington's lips went white, but they held themselves rigid, awaiting the answer. Salome, pale from her labors and excitements, stared bewilderedly from one to the other of them.

"*Non capisco*—I do not understand," said Filippo, lapsing into his native tongue, in his astonishment, and then translating.

"Oh, yes, you do!" cried Abner.

"Father!" cried Salome, as he moved threateningly toward the boy.

"Nothin' from you!" roared the old man. "Take her away, Prudence! This is between men—or between a man an' a skunk!"

But Salome shook off her mother's hand. She understood. She was fired with rebellion at last. She stepped swiftly to Filippo's side.

"They think," she said, in a voice that shook with shame and anger, "that you—were here—to see me."

"No, no, no! To be near you, to be near you, beloved!"

"I know. But they——"

"That will do from you!" cried Abner. "This, I suppose, accounts for

your brightenin' up so much these last few weeks, you——"

"Abner!" wailed his wife. "Oh, no! Oh, no! She is a good girl! S'lome is a good girl!"

"Who do you think will believe that when half the township was here to-night an' saw him here? When half the township knows that he gave the alarm? My God, think what they're all sayin' now, as they go home! They're askin' what the dago was doin' here at midnight, an' they're answerin' each other—oh, they're answerin' each other an' snickerin' an' chucklin'—— A Harrington, mind you!"

And then it was that Salome turned to the still-dazed Filippo.

"Filippo," she said, "I will come with you if you want me, and we will be married. They think that I am bad—my mother and my father think that I am bad: I will stay here no longer."

They went out into the molten glory of a November dawn, splendid beyond the hills. But Salome saw nothing of the glory. She felt nothing of joy. She had passed through youth's bitterest trial—she had heard the judgment of a world grown old and unbelieving upon the silver visions of the young, and it had been in the voice of her parents that the world had spoken.

III.

And so they went away, and so they were married; and gossip wagged its ugly head, for did not the Harringtons keep aloof? And could the Harringtons possibly have done that, seeing that they owed so much to Filippo, if the very worst had not been true? So the salacious countryside, given at times to extracting its excitements from scandal, transforming the old Puritan zeal for righteousness and horror of self-indulgence into something too foul to bear the light of day.

There was an old deserted farm-

house out of Durhamton, on the road that led in the opposite direction from Abner Harrington's. Filippo hired it for next to nothing, and mended it with odds and ends that Uncle Gregorio furnished him. Filippo bought a second-hand bicycle to carry him into the village to work for that successful mason each day. Filippo dug and spaded and planted seeds. And somewhere he procured an old fiddle, and, when the day's labors, so multitudinous, but so joyous, were past, he played to Salome. And the magic of youth worked in them, and they were happy, though they were poor and lived laborious lives, and though part of their world frowned upon them. The summer found the deserted house's grotesque patchwork of mending covered with vines and flowers. Salome's garden beds were a blaze of glory. Filippo coaxed the flowers to bloom as he coaxed all manner of happiness into the world.

One day Salome's cup of bliss ran over. Up between the verbenas and the candytuft, the poppies and the larkspur, an angular figure stepped slowly. Salome, mixing gingerbread within the white-curtained kitchen window, saw her mother. Happiness had driven out the bitterest memory of the night when she had left her home to follow Filippo's fortunes; the happy can always forgive. She threw down her measuring spoon and ran to the door and down the path.

"Mother, mother!" she cried.

And her mother's aching arms went about her and her mother's lips tried to frame words of pleading and of explanation. But Salome, who had learned the value of kisses, kissed them quiet and drew her mother into the house.

It was her great, great day, for she was enabled to tell her mother a secret that she had told no one yet. And it was a secret in the holy joy of which her mother could share, and they clung

together, looking down the ages at a long vista of old women and young women linked together in the ineffable sympathies of motherhood.

Filippo came home. He turned in toward the house slowly.

"It is only noon! He is hurt!" cried Salome.

She sped to him. He raised stricken eyes to hers.

The emperors and the great lords, in their council chambers, had brought about the hour when Salome must give up her husband or give up his honor. They had heard so little of the great war, absorbed in their tasks of living and loving, off among the hills; but Filippo had been summoned to join the colors.

"I could stay," whispered Filippo, "But then—never again to see my country—"

"You will go, my own," whispered Salome, "and you will come back to me—" She had been going to say, "and to your little child," but she forbore. She would say nothing to weaken her husband. So she finished: "My mother has come to see us."

Filippo's face brightened.

"Ah, then I shall not fear to go. She will befriend you."

IV.

Next summer, the old gray house will be bare of vines, and the paths before it will not blaze with flowers, and no songs will sound through the broken windows. The Harringtons will not drive Salome, frail in her black, out in that direction.

They are very kind to her. They love her, and yearn over her. They would fain undo all the hurt the emperors and the great lords have inflicted—poor, meager-minded man and woman on the Durhamton hills, who see the glory of empire as a rushlight compared to the happiness that blazed for a little day before a tumble-down house.



The Bright Lexicon of Youth

By Edwin L. Sabin

Author of "The Stolen Forty," "The Success Line," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY DAN SAYRE GROESBECK

Fate took a hand, but it was mostly the real ability of impractical Jimmie that turned the scales in his favor. A delightfully amusing story by a favorite author.

O H, Jimmie!" resignedly sighed Petie, swinging her foot from the hammock where she nestled. "I've told you and told you why I can't marry you! Do we have to go all over this again?"

"We do!" The voice of James Henry Jones was firm, his lips were set tight, and his famous red hair—that bee-yootiful red hair, so curly and crisp, as Petie frankly admitted—actually bris-

tled. When he acted terribly determined, thus, Petie was almost afraid—afraid of him and afraid of herself.

"If only you were more practical, Jimmie!" she ventured.

Jimmie snorted.

"Great Cæsar! That's what you always say. Practical! I'd like to know why I'm not practical!"

"But you're an inventor, and inventors are notoriously impractical.

Besides, so many of your inventions don't work."

"But I do," retorted Jimmie. "Look at my hands!"

Petie did not look; she already had looked. She was well acquainted with the state of Jimmie's hands. When they were not stained yellow by chemicals, they were stained black by shellac or enamel or automobile grease. However, as Jimmie had often assured her, they were clean. And so was Jimmie, inside and out.

"Why don't you invent a soap to take that off?" she challenged triumphantly. "You invent it on, as a starter; now you ought to finish up and invent it off!"

"I will," promised Jimmie. "I'm going to. I've got the formula of a bleach and grease remover nearly done. And I can use it on my hair, too," he vengefully threatened.

"Jimmie," severely reproved Petie, "if you change your hair one iota, I'll never speak to you again. You've lovely hair. If I could have that bee-yoo-tiful shade of cowy red, I'd use your bleach. Don't move, please. The sun touches you just right."

"There's an ant crawling down my neck," complained Jimmie, mollified.

But he didn't move. He might have had as many necks as a hydra, and ants might have been crawling down them all, and he would not have disappointed Petie by moving.

As for Petie changing *her* hair, the idea was monstrous. It filled him with alarm. He'd love her, regardless; but those glossy-black, bobbing curls—which some days numbered eight in a bunch, and some days an aggressive eleven, and some days only six, according to her mood—that crinkly ebony wave gathered back from her clear forehead, those countless little tendrils rebelliously fringing the adorable nape of her white neck, those twin pairs like question marks on her equally

white temples—— Why, one alteration in that precious ensemble would have been a crime against natural art!

"It isn't done yet, quite, Petie," he hastily informed.

"It never is; that's one trouble," alleged Petie. "You get just so far with your inventions, and then you stick. Why don't you finish some?"

"Didn't I finish up a wringer for the mater's laundry, and get it patented, too? And it's great!"

"Yes; but it's the only *one* in existence," reminded Petie.

"I know it," ruefully conceded James Henry. "Costs too much to manufacture. But it's a success. Anyway," he continued, cheering up, "I've about finished that carburetor, Petie. I really have. You know that new-shaped needle valve I was telling you about the other day——"

"Oh, Jimmie!" sighed Petie. "How can I remember? You tell me so much about so many things!"

"But I drew you a cross section of it. I cross-sectioned the whole carburetor for you," protested Jimmie. "The needle valve was marked 'N.' That was the old one. And, remember, I sketched you a new one."

"That thing I thought was a crochet needle?" queried Petie.

"Shucks!" deplored Jimmie. He manfully forged ahead. "Well, anyhow, I made a model this morning——"

"As I can see by your hands," murmured Petie.

"That's only brass. Oxalic acid'll take it off," Jimmie apologized. "But I made the needle valve, and put it in, and you ought to see the difference! She never chokes-up, and she——"

"Why 'she,' I wonder?" hazarded Petie.

"Well, when we men love something very much, we always call it 'she,'" laboriously explained Jimmie. "'She' is a high-mucky-muck of a word—expresses perfection."

"Oh!" ejaculated Petie, coloring. "Thank you!"

"Take it as personally as you please," bade Jimmie. "And the carburetor's a peach, too, Petie. Now I can burn any old stuff, and get more gimp than I could out of racing gas. You ought to see me go! Hit only the tops of things. And I've a man who'll——"

"Jimmie!" Petie clapped her hands to her ears. "Don't!"

For when Jimmie began—or resumed, rather, inasmuch as he never quit—on automobile mechanics, he plunged in all over. That was Jimmie's besetting sin—automobile mechanics. Automobile mechanics enthralled him like a checkerboard puzzle or an Openheim serial. He had turned his own garage into a machine shop and experiment station, where he smeared his hands and his face, and sometimes even his bee-yōo-ti-ful red hair, when he omitted, in his earnestness, to wear his greasy cap. His disreputable, grimy overalls and jumper were his delight. Yet, when cleaned up, Jimmie was a very attractive young man.

"Jimmie," again said Petie, removing her hands, "why don't you settle down and *do* something and *be* somebody, instead of just frittering and fooling?"

"How, now?" challenged Jimmie, pugnacious. Petie, he foresaw, was on her hobby.

"Why—study law. You'd make a fine lawyer. And your father wants you to study law, and he'll see you through, he says, and help you, and you could go right in with him and be a great success."

Jimmie writhed.

"Law!" he repudiated, in that one word. "I hate it! I hate all that kind of work—stuck in an office! I couldn't study law, and I'd be a failure after I did study it."

"In the bright lexicon of youth there is no such word as 'fail,'" quoth Petie.

Jimmie snorted his snort.

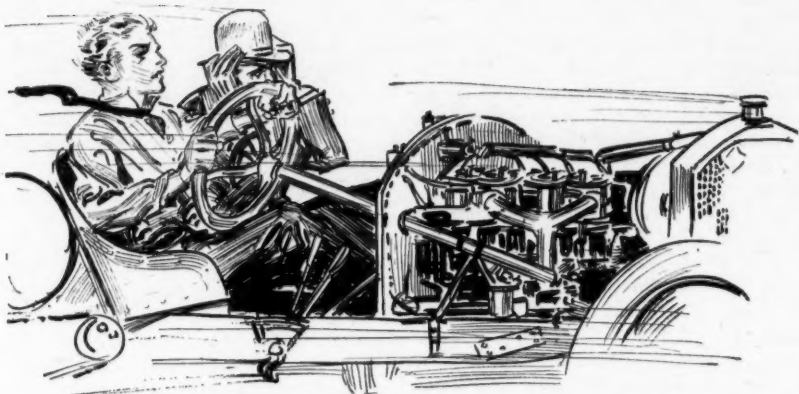
"Piffle! I suppose you get that 'law' bug from that fellow Morris. He's studying law. He'd make you think he's a regular Blackstone. And what else does he know? Nothing. I'd like to get him with his good clothes on under an automobile, once."

"Mr. Morris has more important aims in life than to crawl about under automobiles and come out with grease on his nose and clothes," replied Petie, with dignity. "He's working right up in his profession, and isn't spending his time on foolishness. Of course, he has to keep neat. Besides, automobiles, for men like him, are made to ride in, not to crawl under. And everybody thinks he's a remarkably smart boy—so steady."

"Huh!" exploded Jimmie. "And when he gets out on the road in that machine of his, and it stops on him, he doesn't know whether it's his carburetor or his spark plugs, and so he sits until somebody comes along with a little common sense and helps him out. A man like that oughtn't to own a machine. He isn't safe. He can't even change an inner tube."

"Jimmie," implored Petie, "I won't listen to you! Mr. Morris," she reproved, "is a friend of mine. Why do you get so uncivil whenever I happen to mention him? You ought to be ashamed!"

Jimmie writhed and grunted belligerently. That Morris was the "other man." He was always interfering. Why, he was a regular sissy. He didn't know beans. He was a constant reproach, with his immaculate attire and his precise diction and his prospective laurels and his good dancing and his—er—butting in on the Petie-Jimmie preserves. And Petie liked him! No wonder Jimmie writhed. The "other man" is usually obnoxious, but this Morris was unusu-



"Hasn't missed a beat yet," he proclaimed jubilantly, for the inspiration of his patron.

"And did you notice how we picked up on that grade?"

ally obnoxious, especially when proffered as a model.

"Can't you lift your mind above automobiles, Jimmie?" queried Petie. "If you won't study law, study—medicine!"

"I can't and I won't," rasped Jimmie. "I never could be a success in medicine, either. I hate medicine; I hate doctors; I hate that sort of boning—and I don't mean a pun. I mean earnest."

"In the bright lexicon of youth —" essayed Petie.

"I've a man who'll take my carburetor, though, Petie, and manufacture it and pay me a royalty, if it makes good," pleaded Jimmie, enthusiastically again. "I'm to ride him around in the morning and show him. Truly I am."

"Jimmie, I've heard all that before," said Petie. "You're always riding some man around, showing him."

"But that carburetor'll make me almost rich, Petie," excitedly interrupted Jimmie. "And I've lots of other things that—"

"I know you have, Jimmie." And Petie smiled a demure little, sad little

smile. "They're lying all over your shop, and some are on your hands and face. Still, I'd rather not marry you, Jimmie, if you won't force me to, because even a carburetor needs more than air to run it, and I'm living comfortably now. I can take care of myself splendidly, or I can stay at home as long as I want to, and although I'm awfully fond of you, Jimmie, I'm afraid you aren't practical enough, and we couldn't eat your inventions, could we? And I'm afraid I'd always be asking you for money, and you'd grow very tired of having your nose held right to the grindstone every day."

"I'd rather have it on the grindstone than buried in a law book," flashed Jimmie. "Asking for money! What do you think I am?" He sparkled with wrath, and looked so genuinely honest that Petie felt a wild desire to surprise him and kiss him. "You don't suppose you'd ever have to ask me for money, do you? I'd put every cent into the cracked teapot each Saturday evening, and you wouldn't need even to search my pockets, nights!"

"Money, money," conjured Petie, waving an imaginary wand. "Now

Magician Jimmie Jones will materialize you from the air by his latest invention."

This was slightly mean of Petie, but Jimmie was *so* visionary, and *so* obstinate, and he wouldn't see things as she saw them.

"My carburetor, though, Petie," he appealed. "It's all right. It's done. And as soon as I can get it on the market——"

"That will do, Jimmie," Petie soothed. "The poor carburetor will be worn out before you've used it, if you don't give it a rest."

"Shucks!" grumbled Jimmie, in great disgust. He brightened. "But you'll go riding with me this evening, won't you, Petie? So I can show you? I won't drive fast—truly I won't. Not over thirty miles an hour."

"I will not go," Petie promptly refused. "Not one inch. In that sprawly, spidery machine of yours? It makes me feel as if I were a witch on a broomstick. Thank you, but I have certain scruples that urge me to decline."

Jimmie's machine certainly was a remarkable compilation of motor, body, chassis, wheels, and so forth, collected from various wrecking establishments and repair shops, and built up into a whole by himself. In this skeleton of a car, he rattled about over the roads, as proud as a millionaire in a limousine, testing out impromptu contrivances and having numerous hairbreadth escapes. After a few experiences, Petie, with maidenly reserve, had refused longer to be a party to his spectacular jaunts.

Any slur cast upon his valued race—about burned Jimmie to the quick.

"I know it's not like your swell elephant of a thing that's always needing oil or gas or tires, or Morris' new junk that he doesn't know how to run. When you ride with me, Petie, you learn lots of dope, now don't you? But when you

ride with Morris, what do you learn? Nothing, except scenery."

"I think, Jimmie Jones," replied Mistress Petie, with her very most severe air, "that I'm perfectly capable of enjoying a ride in an automobile without being an expert mechanic."

"Morris said that, didn't he?" accused Jimmie. "He read it in a puff advertisement of his car. And when he said it, he pinched his two-cylinder mustache—so!" And Jimmie tried to illustrate.

"And last time you took me out to experiment with, we got stuck and couldn't move either way," pursued Petie relentlessly. "And I had to sit there two hours, while you worked 'fixing' something."

"But I fixed it, didn't I?" Jimmie triumphantly reminded. "It was only the carburetor, anyway. And it's all right now. Really it is. Won't you come, Petie? I want to show you."

Petie resisted his pleading. She violently shook her head until all the eleven little curls were bobbing.

"Nope," she said. "Besides, I have an engagement."

Jimmie grabbed his hat and arose in his majesty.

"Then you don't care for me," he growled, "or you'd give me another chance. I made that carburetor for *you*." And away he stalked.

Petie's laugh tinkled riotously.

"But I don't need a carburetor, Jimmie," she called after him. "Am I not the right mixture? Are you terribly insulted, Jimmie? Please come back."

Jimmie did not turn. His red head disappeared amidst the shrubbery of the front pathway. She watched it go regretfully, for she was absurdly fond of Jimmie. Indeed, sometimes—She sighed. She wondered if she had been unkind. Maybe she should have betrayed more interest in his old carburetor. He had worked hard with that carburetor, had Jimmie; and he

was clever—a regular genius at making things. Everybody liked Jimmie. But he lived in such a whirl of schemes beckoning ahead of him and unaccomplished behind him. No, he didn't seem practical—yet. On the other hand, there was Mr. Morris, very practical and very steady and somewhat of a bore. He didn't scintillate; Jimmie scintillated.

The next morning, at ten minutes after ten by the dash clock, and thirty-three miles by the trip figures of the speedometer, the big touring car that Petie was deftly guiding and controlling on a family spin began to cough discordantly and jerk with symptoms of an acute epileptic fit. Petie frantically manipulated the dash adjustment of the carburetor, but improved matters so little that the machine stopped short and died, figuratively speaking. The attack had apparently proved fatal.

"What's the matter?" issued from the rear seat, in the plaintive, accusing voice of her mother.

"I don't know," faltered Petie, much distressed.

"Out of gasoline," injudiciously asseverated, from his seat of honor beside her, Mr. Morris.

"Out of gasoline," at once echoed her father, and her mother gasped dismally.

But as all of them put together knew even less about a machine than Petie did—and she really knew a little—she was emboldened to enter prompt and indignant denial.

At any rate, the car could not have stopped in a hotter spot. And, worse, she had engaged to restore Mr. Morris, whom they had picked up, to his legal duties at ten-thirty sharp.

Owing chiefly to his red head, James Henry, when he had left on the previous afternoon, had been deeply angered. But a red head, being a good conductor, discharges as quickly as it overheats;

and besides, nobody, particularly James Henry, could long be angry with Petie. Now, as he scudded over the road this morning, with the revised carburetor working beautifully, and the prospective investor intent in the companion seat of the spidery race-about, all his dudgeon had dissipated.

"Hasn't missed a beat yet," he proclaimed jubilantly, for the inspiration of his patron. "And did you notice how we picked up on that grade?"

"W-well, it's a light car, of course," reasoned the prospect.

"Light nothing!" stoutly retorted James Henry. "She weighs seventeen hundred, and she figures only sixteen horse power. I can put that carburetor on a big car and increase her power twenty per cent." He was talking large, and he knew it, but he had the faith of enthusiasm. "And do it on distillate and water, too, at cost of about four cents a gallon. Don't forget that."

"I'm willing to be shown," succinctly said the prospect.

James Henry had a rejoinder ready, but he didn't utter it. Instead, with eyes fastened on the road ahead, he remarked, *sotto voce*—whatever that may mean to the censor:

"For the love of Mike!"

He had sighted the Petie car, tilted at the roadside, with a little bevy of would-be assistants surrounding it. Yes, it was Petie's car; he could not mistake that. He knew it, every inch, from radiator to differential case.

When, with a swoop, he bore down and halted at the scene, Petie's face flamed upon him piteously. She was dusty and hot and vexed and uncomfortable. Her gloves and waist were, she knew, disgraceful. The volunteer helpers, if gallant, were still the worse for their researches. Her father and mother had dismounted, and stood, ill at ease, in the nearest shade. Mr. Mor-



"Have you found it?" quavered Petie's nervous mother. "Fault's with the magneto," an-

ris was teetering helplessly on one foot and glancing at his watch

"Hello, there!" cheerily greeted Jimmie. "What's the trouble? Stalled?"

"It won't go," explained Petie, well-nigh in tears. "It acts horrid—just coughs and misses and jerks."

"What's it doing out in the sand?" demanded Jimmie, with a grin.

"It got turned out some way, while we were trying to make it go. I didn't mean to turn it so far," pleaded Petie. "Now it won't budge. Nobody seems able to fix it so it will move."



swered the cheerful Jimmie, now hotter and grimmer than could possibly have been expected.

"Let's see," quoth Jimmie, alertly springing to the rescue. If there was one thing that fascinated him, it was an automobile that didn't run well, and, furthermore, this was Petie's car. "I'll start her up."

Petie watched with anxious heart.

She was unaffectedly glad to have Jimmie here, was Petie. Mr. Morris had entirely failed her in the emergency. He had let her ruin her own clothes, while he had kept his immaculate; and his vapid suggestions and his evident impatience had annoyed her. But Jim-

mie, she was certain, could fix the car, if anybody could. He had a surgeon's touch, for an automobile. Somehow his very movements spelled confidence—and she was pleased to note the other helpers standing back, relaxed, as if aware that an authority had arrived. Jimmie was in his mechanic's costume, but that made no difference. He had the air of a gentleman, nevertheless. In fact, Petie felt a little proud of him and of the ability that he was to demonstrate.

He climbed into the driver's seat and started the motor. It uttered the lately acquired horrid noises, and Jimmie juggled in vain with the dash adjustment of the carburetor.

"She's shooting on about two cylinders," he informed.

"Anybody can hear that," retorted Mr. Morris, rather testily.

The idle bystanders laughed, Petie was enraged, but Jimmie retained his red-headed cheerfulness.

"You ought to have a good carburetor on it, instead of this old sluice pot," he observed slyly to Petie; and Petie bridled at the libel.

He climbed out.

"Tested the spark plugs yet?" asked Jimmie. "It may be the ignition."

"N-no, we haven't," confessed Petie, blushing. That simple first aid to the injured—which she had watched Jimmie apply many times—had wholly escaped her, in her embarrassment, and, of course, Mr. Morris hadn't known enough to suggest it.

"Huh!" commented Jimmie.

He proceeded to bury his head under the hood and experiment. He called in the service of a screw driver and a pair of pliers, and smeared his forehead with grime, but he did not much change matters. Occasionally he added a cylinder, and then again he lost it. He shut off the engine and quit.

"Have you found it?" quavered,

from the shade of the tree, Petie's nervous mother.

"Yes. Fault's with the magneto," answered the cheerful Jimmie, now hotter and grimmer than could possibly have been expected. "The plugs don't spark regularly, but the wiring seems O. K. If you only had my carburetor!"—he grinned, and Petie wanted to shake him—with a little squeeze—for his impudence—"you might get enough power to pull out, anyway. Guess you'd better be towed in. I wouldn't run the car that way, if I were you."

"I won't be towed," declared Petie, aghast. "That's too humiliating. Can't you fix us here, Jimmie? Please fix us, just so we can crawl along."

"I'll try," said Jimmie.

Whereupon Mr. Morris retired to the shade, as if washing his hands—which did not need washing—of the irritating affair. Petie was disdainfully glad to be rid of him, and loyally stayed by Jimmie.

Jimmie set to work, and soon she was sorry that she had bidden him to. He spread so many tools around, and accumulated so much heat and perspiration, and sometimes he was underneath the reeking engine, and sometimes atop of it, and—

"What are you doing, Jimmie?" she reproved, in dismay.

By this time all the strangers who had gathered to her succor were deserting the strenuous session, leaving at work only Jimmie and, under the tree, her mother and father and Mr. Morris and Jimmie's companion. Once or twice the companion had ventured near and inspected operations, but had offered no criticisms.

"Taking off the magneto," Jimmie replied to her.

Presently off it came. With streaming face, and complexion more vivid than his coveted hair, Jimmie scrutinized the outside. Then he seated him-

self on the hot running board and began to delve into the inside.

"Think you can get it together again?" queried the man, his companion, inspecting.

"Sure," averred the cheerful Jimmie. The man silently retreated. While Jimmie whistled to himself and studied his mysterious array, Petie caught snatches of conversation from under the tree, which informed her that her father and Jimmie's companion were admiring Jimmie's mechanical trend. Certainly! Her Jimmie boy was smart. Here he looked up at her and smiled his good-humored smile.

"Busted," he reported. "Awful dirty, too. When did you have it cleaned?"

"I don't know," faltered Petie. "Is it badly broken?"

"Well," decreed Jimmie reflectively, "I might fix it temporarily, but it wouldn't stay. I can fix it at home, though. You'd better not risk running with it."

"Then we can't go?" gasped Petie.

"You'll have to be towed in."

"Who'll tow us?"

Said Jimmie, confidently rising:

"I will."

"With that thing of yours?" scoffed Petie. "You can't."

"In the bright lexicon of youth there is no such word as 'can't,'" reminded Jimmie, calmly gathering the magneto parts together and trotting for his machine.

"If you'll pull that car out on the mixture you're using, I'll take your carburetor," suddenly called Jimmie's companion from under the tree. "How does that strike you?"

"Dead easy," responded Jimmie. "Get aboard with me, to hold me down."

Petie, retreating to the shade to watch operations, was torn by conflicting emotions. At first she had resented the very idea of being towed. Then she had resented being towed by that

piratical machine of Jimmie's. Then she had resented Jimmie's assumption, based evidently on his wonderful carburetor, that he *could* tow them. And now, in a twinkling, she found herself hoping that he *would*!

For the nincompoop of a Mr. Morris had just voiced his concurrence in her own judgment by saying briskly:

"He'll never pull you out in the world, Miss Patricia."

Nobody helped Jimmie. Of course, her mother and father couldn't help, and Mr. Morris didn't help, and the horrid man who had issued the challenge wouldn't help—and as for herself, she didn't dare to help. Jimmie alone trundled his spidery car into position, extricated a rope from amidst the miscellany that jangled in his built-in tool box, and attached it to form a connecting link between the two machines.

"Shall we get in?" quavered Petie's mother.

"Get aboard, all of you," ordered the cheerful Jimmie. "The more, the merrier. Then we won't have to stop. I want Petie at the wheel, anyway."

Petie's mother fatuously hastened forward; Petie's docile father followed; they entered the rear seat; Mr. Morris dubiously entered the front seat; and Petie assumed the wheel, to stare ahead at Jimmie and his companion in the spider.

"All set?" inquired Jimmie nonchalantly.

With red head turned over shoulder and grimy visage alert, he threw in the gear and let in the clutch. His companion likewise was turned, watching. Petie hated *him*—he was taking a mean advantage of circumstances—but she loved Jimmie, grimy or not.

Barking furiously, the little car edged forward. Petie afterward vowed that first it reared on its forelegs, and then it reared on its hind legs, and then it squatted low like a sturdy pony,

and tugged. The rope tautened; the little car tugged, tugged, absolutely bellying with determination; the big car under Petie quivered, creaked, stirred—and reluctantly rolled, slowly, slowly, and faster, Petie fairly praying as she carefully guided it out of the sand and upon the hard road.

"Hurrah!" praised Jimmie's companion.

"Hurrah!" jubilated Petie.

"Well done!" agreed Petie's father.

And, "Seeing is believing," admitted Mr. Morris; adding, however, with legal caution, "although not always."

Jimmie said naught. With a concluding grin, he turned his face about, threw into intermediate, and went bowling along, much like a privateer bringing a frigate prize into port. Petie, holding fast to her wheel, was not ashamed; indeed, she cherished the hope that maybe by her skillful steering she *had* helped him a teeny bit. He was the only Jimmie.

If that man did not accept that carburetor *now*—

So, after getting rid of the impatient and useless Mr. Morris at a corner convenient for him, they all arrived in a sort of mutual triumph at the big car's quarters; and, casting off, Jimmie left immediately, taking the man with him, and promising to bring back the magneto that evening. Petie decided at once what dress she would have on, and the number of curls she would let stick out, to bob. As her mood, she foresaw, probably would be receptive, rather than aggressive, seven would be proper—for luck.

So Jimmie discovered her, becomingly arrayed and remarkably pensive, in the hammock.

"Hail to the victor!" she greeted.

"Did he take it?"

"Who take what?"

"That man and your carburetor. He *said* he would," accused Petie.

Jimmie flopped down. He was beam-

ing, with his bee-yoo-tiful red head and all.

"Took it, and I've signed up the contract with him," he grandly reported. "So I skip out next week."

"Where?" uttered Petie, startled.

"To the factory. Didn't your father tell you? They settled the matter under the tree. That is, your father spoke a good word for me. I ought to thank him. Where is he?"

"I don't know," hastily denied Petie, and Jimmie sank back.

"Well, anyway, he spoke a good word for me, and he's going to take stock in the new company, and I'm due at the factory."

"What factory?" faintly asked Petie, with never a curl bobbing.

"The — factory. That man I was toting about is vice president of the company that makes the — machines." And although the name is censored out here, because the carburetor is not yet on the market—but it's coming—Petie thrilled at the big sound. "We're going to put my thingumajig on the next-year cars, and make it in a separate branch, and I'm to be assistant boss and help with a new motor besides. You ought to see the sketches of that new motor, Petie! She's a humdinger! And I get a nice, fat salary, and a batch of stock, and a little percentage, too. Why, I'd work with that factory for nothing! It has the best bunch of live engineers in the country."

"I'm so glad," faltered Petie, feeling as if she had no curls at all.

"The luck with your juggernaut cinched the deal, I think," rattled the elated Jimmie, who seemed to be stepping rather high. "The royal potentate was much impressed. He liked the way I dug into the mag, too. Here it is. I'll stick it on."

"No," said Petie. "You'll get all dirty. You've done enough for one



"The luck with your juggernaut cinched the deal, I think," rattled the elated Jimmie, who seemed to be stepping rather high.

day. It was—awfully fortunate that you came along, wasn't it?"

"A man," observed Jimmie, "sometimes is useful as well as ornamental."

"Some men are," assented Petie.

"*E pluribus unum*," responded Jimmie, oracular. "Which means Johnny on the spot—see?"

"Oh!" protested Petie, indignant, but flattered. "There haven't been so very many. Principally you."

"Huh!" grunted Jimmie, who had his

memories. "Anyway, now that I'm a regular recognized automobile engineer, you can't say I'm not practical, Petie."

"N-no," admitted Petie. "And half the time I don't think what I say. I mean, I didn't before."

"And you wouldn't have to ask me for money. You could garnishee my wages."

"I wouldn't like to do *that*," faltered Petie.

Jimmie gazed upon her speakingly,

while marshaling further argument. Petie gazed apparently upon nothing. There was a silence, which is presumed to occupy the next full minute.

"Oh!" Petie abruptly thought aloud, with a quick blush and an energetic bob of her seven curls together. "But I couldn't possibly get ready next week."

"Why," gasped Jimmie, "yes, you could! You wouldn't have to have a thing. Let me tell you——"

But he told her so much, in volume both practical and impractical, that for it the reader is referred again to the bright lexicon of youth, previously mentioned.



SPRING TWILIGHT

WHAT'S about this time o' year,
When the gloaming, soft but bright,
Binds the day's green-fluttering cheer
To the thick-sown stars of night—
What is in the fading glow
Wakens up the memory so?

Shrill, this twilight, not with whirl
Of small gnat wings, or the strum
Of the humming moth astir
Where the sweetest flowers have come.
Keener notes are on the air,
Urchins romping everywhere.

Dearest, I was such a lad
In a spring of yesterday;
Through the twilight, joyous, mad,
Tossing lesson books away;
Shouting till I scarce could speak,
I was prince of hide and seek.

You were quieter—a maid
Quaint and dainty, who preferred
Tiny hunts for fireflies; played
Like a moth yourself, or bird.
Did the "other fellows" know
I, the bold, did sometimes go

Stealing from their company
To the garden hedges high
Where your little self would be
Near your careful mother's eye?
Oh, the blush, half shame, half bliss,
As my boy cheek met your kiss!

RHEEM DOUGLAS.



Garden Sass

By Wallace Irwin

ILLUSTRATED BY H.V. MAYER

ANY steady occupation
 Makes the life of ocean charming.
 Perkins, of the brig *Tarnation*,
 Always had a taste for farming.

Being of the sea's profession,
 Perkins couldn't farm on land, sir,
 But he fostered his obsession
 In a way you'll understand, sir.

When we was in port at Salem,
 Perkins filled his ship with loam, sir,
 Saying: "If their crops, they fail 'em,
 Farmers needn't stay at home, sir."

When our ship set sail for Cuba,
 Perkins sot us all a-working,
 Braying orders like a tuba—
 Nary salt-sea farm hand shirking.

All the decks we lined with soil, sir,
 All the soil we plowed and harrowed,
 Seed we sowed with patient toil, sir,
 Raked and shoveled and wheel-barrowed.

Soon it rained upon the ocean.
 Lo, behold, with merry shouting,
 All us sailors made commotion,
 Seeing how the decks were sprouting!

Peas were sprouting in the foc'stle;
 Corn and lettuce on the deck, sir;
 And we yelled: "Them land-farm blokes'll
 Learn their trade from us, by heck, sir!"

When we reached the tropic water,
 Southern sunshine brightly blazing,
 Crops shot upward—and you oughter
 Seen the corn that we was raising!

Fields was waving round the galley,
 And around the yards and mast trees
 Bean vines twined, as in a valley
 Ivy creepers cover *vast* trees.

On the deck house mighty pumpkins
 Flourished, 'longside new potatoes,
 While we hoed like country bumpkins
 To encourage ripe tomatoes.

Every perfect scene must close, sir;
 Every daydream has its banshee.
 One dark night Cap' Perkins rose, sir,
 Howling like a wild Comanshee.

"All on deck, sir! Man the hoes, sir!
 Grab yer scythes and reap, ye lubbers!
 Ship's a-sinkin'! There she blows, sir!
 Dig and dump the spuds, ye grubbers!"

Hoes and rakes and scythes all vainly
 Did we wield with manly grip, sir;
 For our fate we seen quite plainly—
 Them there crops had sprung the ship, sir!

Roots of corn and spring alfalfa,
 Growing toward our vessel's heart, sir,
 As omega stands to alpha,
 All our planks had spread apart, sir.

Soon an awful roar resounded.
 Down the ship went in a mass, sir.
 All the crew but me was drowned.
 I was saved by garden sass, sir.

Weeks on raw string beans subsisting,
 Into land I came awash, sir,
 Pumpkin vines around me twisting,
 Buoyed up by a winter squash, sir.



Ostracized

By Helen R. Martin

Author of "Tillie, a Mennonite Maid," "Barnabetta," "For a Mess of Pottage," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

THE FIRST INSTALLMENT*

Liddy Fitzenberger, a girl of eighteen, living with her father and her stepmother in the Pennsylvania-Dutch village of Virginsburg, has grown up in a curious state of isolation. Something in the past of Mr. Fitzenberger and his second wife—Liddy does not know what—has resulted in their ostracism by the village, and Liddy, innocent as she is, is included in the ban. Her father, a well-to-do retired tanner, moves through life as devoid of emotion, apparently, as a wooden automaton, paying no more attention to Liddy than if she did not exist; and his wife, while lavishing endearments upon her husband, is positively hostile to his daughter. Liddy's few timid attempts to solve the mystery that hangs over the household are futile. A picture, found in a trunk in the attic, of a sad-faced young woman, with a child at either side and a baby in her lap, is Liddy's only clew to the past, and cut off as she is from all human intercourse, she has no way of learning the fate of her mother and the other children. Into this lonely life comes a great joy in the shape of a friendship with the son of a neighboring farmer, Elmer Wagenhorst, a young man of intelligence and native refinement, who is attracted to Liddy first by her beauty and then by her mental qualities, for in her solitude she has thought and read more than most girls of her age. Elmer is to enter college in the fall, and for fear of imperiling his chance of an education he does not dare arouse his father's anger by openly avowing his friendship for Liddy. She agrees to meet him secretly, though she instinctively feels that there is something ignoble in his conduct.

THE SECOND INSTALLMENT

CHAPTER VI.

LIDDY, having prodded herself up to the point of making a very bold request of her father, found herself repeatedly foiled, day after day, in her endeavor to get him alone to herself for just five minutes, in order to execute her purpose.

"I haven't known before how Joye is *always* with him!" she marveled. "Will I have to, meebby, *write* to pop to tell him what I want to?"

But even that expedient seemed inadequate.

"Joye would read my letter," she concluded despairingly.

She speculated as to whether she *could* talk the thing over with her father in Joye's presence.

"It would be hard enough to get his attention if I was all alone with him;

and if she is by, I don't believe I *could* make him listen."

But at last, one evening after supper, when two weeks had passed since Elmer's departure and she had still not found the opportunity she sought, she resolutely joined her father and her stepmother in the sitting room, where they so constantly sat together and where Liddy almost never intruded upon them.

To the surprise of both of them—yes, even her father showing signs of life at her unaccustomed presence here—she drew up a chair and seated herself in front of him.

"Pop, I got to speak something to you."

His newspaper dropped to his knee; but his dead eyes, staring straight in front of him, did not meet hers. Joye,

*In the April SMITH's you will find the first installment in full. There is no reason, however why you shouldn't start the story now.

at the other side of the center table, sewing on what she called some "porter-ears" to hang at the parlor doors, did not look up. But her honeyed voice, speaking in, entirely ignored the girl's presence.

"There's just three little words," she said, seeming to continue a discourse that Liddy had interrupted, "that'll always—so I always say—keep happiness between a mated pair of turtle-doves like me and you, dearie—just three dear little words: 'I—love—you.' Carry them words around in your bosom, and the darkest clouds will dispel in sweet sunshine. *Ain't*, dearie?"

Mr. Fitzenberger, as usual, made no least sign of hearing her, the rambling, irrelevant, senseless harangues in which his wife was wont to indulge herself riotously, with an apparently sensual enjoyment, passing off from him as harmlessly as if he were stone-deaf.

"Pop, I want to ask you——" Liddy tried again.

"And with such a true and steadfast mate as what *I* got, that would put his two hands under my feet for me to walk on—— Well I remember that there time you sayed to me: 'Sweetie'—you always called me 'sweetie,' don't you know?—'sweetie, look at them pearly clouds in the sky, tinged with pink—like your own little ears!' And I sayed to you: 'Yes, that there's certainly a handsome landscape. There's nothing like the hand of human nature.'"

She paused to thread a needle, and Liddy wondered *how* her stepmother could be so "dumb" as always to say what she didn't mean.

"The hand of *human* nature' is just what she *don't* mean," she thought impatiently.

"Pop——" she broke in, but got no further.

"So I wrote off a poem about it," continued Joye placidly. "Do you mind of it, dearie?" And, bending back her

head, with her eyes closed, she impressively repeated:

"Her ears were pink, her eyes were blue,
Her face was pure and wery true,
While on her head a crown of pearls
Is resting on her golden curls."

She opened her eyes, lifted her head, and resumed her sewing.

Liddy, as hardened as was her father to these poetical inflictions, bore it as stoically.

"And I wrote off a poem to-day," Joye continued, "about this here sanguinary European conflict:

"All hail, three cheers for France!
Her gallant colors wave,
And she, with her gallant comrades,
Comes on the wave,
The wave of war. The wave of peace,
Is rolling in other parts,
But the wave of war is eating men's hearts."

"Joye," said Liddy patiently, but with a new note of firmness in her voice that arrested the attention of her listeners, "will you leave me speak to pop for just a minute? Pop"—she hastened to wedge in her request—"I want to take lessons off of the new minister."

Her father did not move or speak.

"To be sure, I know," Liddy hurried on, "that the preacher that was here before wouldn't have given me lessons. He'd uv had afraid of what the folks would say. But this one don't know about—about us—and I believe, anyhow, if he did know, he wouldn't mind. For here last Sunday a week, I went into evening service and sat on a back seat where no one noticed me, to listen to the minister's wife play the organ—I had heard her from outside, and it sounded so different from the way any one else ever played it—and then I heard Mr. Armstrong preach. He preached about Christian charity, and it sounded so much as if he meant what he said. So I feel pretty nearly sure he *would* give me lessons."

She paused, but her father did not speak.

"Pop," she pleaded, "I want to get better educated than what I am."

Her father, sitting stolidly in his chair by the lamp, betrayed by not a flicker of his eyes that he heard a word she said.

"Pop! Dare I go over and ask Reverend Armstrong if he will leave me take lessons off of him?"

She received no answer. Was her father waiting for his wife to pass judgment upon her request? But Joye, bending over her stitching, seemed as deaf to the girl's words as did her husband.

Liddy suddenly rose, placed her two hands on her father's shoulders, and, bending her eyes to his, forced him to meet them.

"Pop, you must tell me!"

At the touch of her hands, he started violently, as if suddenly roused to life, and glared at her.

"What do you want?" he asked hoarsely.

"Didn't you hear what I said to you, pop?"

He drew a long, deep breath, as if gathering up all his forces to meet this strenuous demand upon his power to think.

"Yes, I heard you. Set down."

Liddy obeyed and waited.

"What fur do you want more education?"

"For something to take up my mind, pop—to take the place of what other girls have—friends and mebbly beaus. I'll go crazy of my lonesomeness if I can't give my mind something to think about!"

"She has enough to think about," Joye quietly and sweetly spoke in, "with her housework. See, Samuel!"—she held up her sewing for his inspection—"what your little sweetie's hands are doin' for to brighten and make pretty his home for him, my love. Porter-ears are wonderful swell, the wom-

an's section says. It wouldn't be handy havin' her away takin' lessons; and when it ain't handy, it's so inconvenient."

She leaned back in her chair and slowly rocked, as she resumed her stitching.

Mr. Fitzenberger lifted his newspaper as if the discussion were closed. But Liddy quickly laid her hand upon it.

"Tell me, pop."

"This here minister"—his stiff lips spoke mechanically—"would quit teachin' you as soon as he found out how folks downed him fur it."

"But, pop, he preaches so different from other ones that I heard already in Allentown—his sermon about Christian charity sounded just as if it came out of his own life. That's why I ain't afraid to ask him to teach me. Will you give me the dare?"

"It makes me nothin'."

"You'll leave me have the money to pay for lessons?" she breathlessly asked.

"You dare have the money."

"Oh, pop!"

But here again Joye's dulcet voice interposed:

"It would be a waste of money to get her so high educated that way, my love, fur she could not get no school to teach, anyhow. They wouldn't elect her—they're so vulgar and ignorant."

"I know I couldn't get a school. I want to get educated for my own sake," said Liddy.

"No." Joye firmly set her full red lips and shook her head.

"Dare I, pop?"

And then at last her father spoke to his wife:

"She's to have it if she wants it so—whether it's a waste of money or whether it ain't. It's little enough we kin do fur her to make it up to her."

Joye, softly humming the tune of



Liddy suddenly rose, placed her two hands on her father's shoulders, and, bending her eyes to his, forced him to meet them. "Pop, you must tell me!"

"In the Gloaming," turned her portiere and commenced on a new hem. Mr. Fitzenberger picked up his newspaper.

But as Liddy turned to leave the room, her eyes shining with the joy of her success, she was held for one instant by the glance her stepmother cast upon her—that sinister, "ugly" look that several times in her life had left her cold with a nameless fear. And so, as she hurried away now to lose no time in putting her case to the test at the minister's, the brightness died out from her face, leaving it white and worried.

"But what *can* she do me?" she tried

to reassure herself. "I have no need to have afraid of her!"

But that creepy, uncanny dread which Joye had the power of imposing upon her pursued her as she walked down the darkening village street to the Lutheran parsonage.

"Joye's strangeness is like something stopping my breath—and her softness and sweetness are like a horror to me!" She shuddered.

But her own temerity in actually going to a home of the village and asking to talk with its inmates—for the first time in her life—did serve, for the time being at least, to drive into the back-

ground her sense of repulsion from her stepmother.

As she stood on the doorstep of the parsonage, waiting for an answer to her knock, her heart beat fast.

"I couldn't do it—I wouldn't have the courage—if it was not for Elmer."

Her conviction that Elmer would, by the end of his college course, cease to find her companionable unless she, too, became "educated" had goaded her to this difficult step.

It was Liddy's isolation from her neighbors that had kept her ignorant of the sensation in the village over the unheard-of peculiarities of the Reverend William Armstrong and his wife—their Virginia accent, their negro maid and her "swell" garb of black frock and frilled white apron and cap, their "extravagance," their "airs," their entire unlikeness to any pastor who had ever sojourned in that village. So, when, in answer to her knock, the door was opened by what seemed to unsophisticated Liddy like a picture negro, such as she had seen in the illustrations of magazine stories, she stared for an instant, speechless. The silver card plate that the white-aproned, white-capped maid held—for the Armstrongs did not yet realize that formal calls and visiting cards and servants were unknown in Virginsburg—gave Liddy a little thrill, as she recalled how she had read of this worldly ceremony of cards and card plates. These Armstrongs must be very grand people!

"I would like to see Reverend Armstrong," she said shyly, abashed before the "stylishness" of the befrilled and formal "hired girl."

"Will you come in and wait? He's at dinner," the maid answered, in a manner and tone of respect so novel to Liddy as to seem unreal.

She followed the servant into the long, narrow hall of the parsonage. The half-tentatively extended card plate was quickly withdrawn, experi-

ence having evidently taught the maid what not to expect. The caller was ushered into the parlor, and the maid disappeared through the portières that separated this room from the one adjoining.

Liddy caught a glimpse, through the parted curtains, of lighted candles in silver candlesticks on a dinner table—another thing she had seen in pictures.

"The hired girl said *dinner*, in the *evening*, yet!" she marveled.

The sound of soft laughter and sprightly talk, mingled with the subdued clatter of dishes, came to her from the next room. The parlor in which she waited seemed also like a picture room, with its painted floor and Oriental rug, its mahogany furniture and baby-grand piano. Compared to Joye's parlor, it was most severely plain and Puritanic. But Liddy thought it beautiful.

It was very painful to have to face such "high" people as these with her sordid, painful story—for she meant to warn them of the risk they would run in doing anything for her.

She was not kept waiting long. In a few minutes, the portières were again pushed aside, and a young man came into the room. In appearance, he was wholly unlike the many ministers Liddy had seen come and go in this village, for without exception they had all been plain, common men with weak, sappy faces. Now, though Mr. Armstrong's face was not extraordinarily strong or intelligent, it was certainly not sappy, but sincere and spiritual.

Liddy, mentally comparing his slight physique and amiable countenance with Elmer's stalwart frame and vigorous virility, found him, as a mere male, a little lacking. But there were some points of comparison, she realized, in which Elmer, on his side, would have come off badly. Mr. Armstrong's mere manner of walking into the room, his courteous greeting of her, the refine-

ment of his speech and voice, the kindliness of his whole bearing, made Liddy realize that, for the first time in her life, she was speaking to what was called, in the novels she read, a "gentleman."

"Good evening, Miss—— Your name?" the courteous, kindly voice inquired, as the minister shook hands with her.

"Liddy Fitzenberger," she answered shyly, the childlike, wide-open gaze of her dark eyes arousing in the young man a mingled amusement and curiosity.

"Miss Fitzenberger." He bowed, releasing her hand and seating himself. No one had ever called her "Miss Fitzenberger" before, and it sounded to Liddy almost offensive. "As if I was an awful stiff old maid!" she thought.

"You came to see only me—not Mrs. Armstrong, too?" inquired the minister.

It seemed so odd to hear a man refer to his wife so distantly—as "Mrs. Armstrong," as if she were a perfect stranger to him—instead of by her first name, or just as "missus."

"I came to see just you, Reverend Armstrong—on business."

"On business? What can I do for you?" he asked encouragingly. "You are not one of my people, I believe? I don't know them all yet."

"No, I ain't a church member."

"Aren't you? Well, we'll discuss that later. First—what is the business?"

"Would you please, Reverend Armstrong, give me lessons?"

"Lessons?"

"Yes, sir."

"Lessons in what? Theology?" He smiled.

"No, sir, not theology. I want to study what would make me more educated."

"That's a bit hard on theology."

"Yes, sir. A woman ought to know enough to be good company to her mister"—she was quoting Elmer—"and theology wouldn't be interesting to Elmer—I mean," she faltered, flushing crimson at having let slip the name she must never utter for fear of jeopardizing her friend's chances of an education, "I mean I want to get more educated than what I am already, and pop says I have dare now to take lessons off of you."

"Wait a minute!" The young man jumped up and almost ran to the door. "Kit!" he called. "Come here, dear. Come in and meet Miss Fitzenberger," he added, as a small, dainty young thing—a mere girl—dressed very simply and attractively in white, came with him as he returned across the room.

Liddy's keen, quick glance surprised the look of understanding they exchanged, but she did not know how to interpret it. What it really did mean was that these two young people—though quite terribly in earnest and appallingly religious, yet withal very normal and wholesome—were finding their life in Virginsburg hugely entertaining, and the minister didn't want "Kit" to miss the rarity of a young girl's asking to "take lessons off of" him. They were, at any rate, in a particularly hilarious mood this evening, after an afternoon spent in paying parish calls, at every one of which their own point of view and that of their hostesses had seemed to be either tragically or humorously out of joint.

"Mrs. Armstrong, Miss Fitzenberger," pronounced the minister; and the alert, birdlike young woman glided up to the visitor and offered her hand with a frank cordiality that no one had ever before vouchsafed to the little outcast. Liddy caught her breath and bit her lip to check the quick tears that mortifyingly sprang to her eyes at the very unusualness of being so received—as if she were "as good as anybody else."

"Miss Fitzenberger has called to see me," Mr. Armstrong explained to his wife, "about having some private lessons from me. Just to-day"—he turned to Liddy—"Mrs. Armstrong and I were formulating a plan for what we feel is much needed in Virginsburg—some evening classes, or a neighborhood reading association, or something of that sort—for social uplift here."

"I couldn't join any classes," Liddy said, coloring deeply. "It's private lessons I'll have to have. Pop will pay willingly. I want lessons in anything you think will make me more educated. I stopped school when I was thirteen, already, and I never learned anything since—except from reading."

"Most of us," said little Mrs. Armstrong, "learn lots more from our reading than from our schoolbooks. But what kind of reading, Miss Fitzenberger?"

"Mostly novels and magazines."

"What sorts of novels? Please tell us some of your favorites," she said, taking the whole matter out of her husband's hands and proceeding to examine the applicant for an education.

"My favorites? Well, I think I like best the novels of George Eliot."

"Help!" cried Mrs. Armstrong. "Do you mean it?"

"Yes, ma'am. I am sure I never read any novels I liked better."

"But however did you come by her novels in Virginsburg?"

"I get them in at the circulating library in Allentown. The librarian recommended one to me one time, and then I got them all after that—and I love them! For all they made me very sad, too—most of them are so pitiful. But I learned a great deal from her books," said Liddy, "about life and about human nature."

"Did you?" Mr. Armstrong spoke respectfully.

"Yes, sir. It was funny how I thought at first it was a man—this

George Eliot—till here one day I saw in the circulating library a book entitled 'Cross' Life of George Eliot,' and I took it home—I was just wild to read about the life of such an interesting writer—and then I found she was a woman! Just now I'm reading a book that it seems George Eliot told Ralph Waldo Emerson was her favorite book, and he said it was his favorite, too. So I thought *I'd* read it, too. It's entitled 'Rousseau's Confessions.'"

"Rousseau's 'Confessions'!" breathed Mrs. Armstrong, looking helplessly at her husband. "What next?"

"And she comes to *us* for more education!" sighed the minister.

"What do you think, Miss Fitzenberger, of Rousseau's 'Confessions'?" Mrs. Armstrong asked, in a tone of humility.

"It's the queerest book I ever read. It kreistles me a little."

"It—what?"

"It goes against me a little—I don't like it as well as George Eliot and Ralph Waldo Emerson liked it. He was an American gentleman—Ralph Waldo Emerson was—and he took a trip to Europe once and met up with George Eliot."

"Yes," said Mrs. Armstrong politely, not trusting her voice to say more.

"Do you know?"—Liddy spoke eagerly, her face flushed, her eyes shining with the excitement of this unwonted experience of talking with people who knew about the books she loved—"I had felt all the time I was reading George Eliot's books how strange it was that a *man* could write about girls and women and children the way this George Eliot did. And then here I read in 'Cross' Life of George Eliot' that Charles Dickens, when *he* read her books, had felt just like me—he said he felt sure that they had come out of the heart and brain of a *woman*! Just to think," said Liddy breathlessly, sitting on the very edge

of her chair, "of having the power to write out the deep thoughts and feelings of your brain like that! I wish I could do it!"

"If"—Mr. Armstrong laughed gently—"you are so fortunate as to *have* deep thoughts and feelings!"

"I loved it so that this Charles Dickens," continued Liddy, "could see, too, that it was out of the heart of a woman those books had come—and not possibly from a man. Charles Dickens," she explained, "was a novel writer, too. He lived in England, the same as George Eliot. He wrote a great many novels. He's dead this good while back, already. But maybe you've read his books, too?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Armstrong, "we've heard of him. Shakespeare's another good writer. Ever hear of him?"

"Yes, ma'am. He wrote poetry, didn't he, and plays? I tried once to read his works, but it went too slow. I didn't understand them very well."

"That's encouraging. There's something left, then, for us to teach her, Kit," said the minister. "We can read Shakespeare with her."

"If I can keep awake under Shakespeare," said Mrs. Armstrong doubtfully. "I much prefer Bernard Shaw. And I'm sure, Billy," she pleaded, "Shaw's plays are quite as 'educative'—or 'educational,' is it?"

"Shaw would agree with you. Now, then"—he turned to Liddy—"Miss Fitzenberger, I assure you that any one who has read, learned, and inwardly digested all of George Eliot's writings cannot be called uneducated; they constitute in themselves a liberal education, a strenuous mental discipline. What you seem to need are some lessons in English grammar and composition and— Kit, what do they teach young ladies after they are fourteen?"

"Oh, dabs of science and philosophy

and literature and languages—nothing of much account."

"What I want to learn," explained Liddy, "is just what a man going through college would learn."

"It would depend upon the man. Well, when you come for your first lesson, Miss Fitzenberger, we'll decide just what we'd better do."

"Then you *will* leave me take lessons off of you?" asked Liddy eagerly.

"Yes, Miss Fitzenberger. And I'm inclined to think it's going to educate *me* about as much as it will you."

"I want a hand in it, too," claimed Mrs. Armstrong. "I need it as much as you do, Billy."

"The money?" asked Liddy, a little bewildered.

"The education we'll get, Miss Fitzenberger, from teaching you. I suspect we'll find you know more *now* than we do. But we can help you," she added kindly, "in a few commonplace essentials like English grammar."

"And what," Liddy prudently inquired, "will it cost pop for my lessons?"

"Do you know what is usually paid here for such work?" Mr. Armstrong asked.

"Well, I heard, already, that the music teacher gets twenty-five cents a lesson."

Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong exchanged a swift glance; Liddy thought they looked amused.

"I'll tell you how we'll arrange it," said Mrs. Armstrong. "We are in great need of good teachers in the Sunday school, and a young lady who reads as much as you do could teach splendidly. So if you will take a girls' Bible class, that will pay for your lessons."

"Exactly," agreed Mr. Armstrong.

Liddy did not answer. She looked long at Mrs. Armstrong, and her eyes slowly filled with tears.

"Why, my dear, what's the matter?" exclaimed the young woman, with



A committee of influential ladies had called at the parsonage to explain to its inmates that to have their pastor and his wife on friendly, even intimate, terms with this daughter of an outcast household was not acceptable to the congregation.

quick, tender sympathy. "What have we said?"

"I can't teach in the Sunday school. But pop will pay whatever you ask," said Liddy, in a low voice.

"But I'm sure you could teach. Why not? And what's the matter?"

"Mrs. Armstrong, I have to tell you something. You were so kind—I nearly forgot I had to tell you. If I taught in your Sunday school, no one would come. If you do teach me, you'll have to do it in secret. Nobody in Virginsburg ever speaks to me or has anything to do with me."

They received these startling, breathless, hurried announcements in silent consternation.

"You have been," said the minister

awkwardly, "unfortunate, my child—what they call 'unfortunate'?"

"Yes, sir, very unfortunate," Liddy sadly admitted.

"And Virginsburg is very severe upon such—misfortunes?"

"Yes, sir," said Liddy vaguely.

"How long ago was it?" he asked, noting her extreme youth.

"It was all my life."

"What—I don't understand!" he faltered.

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Armstrong, all my life long."

"Billy," Mrs. Armstrong quickly interposed, "you're evidently on the wrong track. Miss Fitzenberger, *why* won't the people have anything to do with you?"

"All I know is that it's on account of something about my father and my stepmother—but I don't know what."

They questioned her, then, wonderingly, finding the thing very hard to grasp—the senseless cruelty to which this perfectly innocent victim had been subjected all her life. Almost the strangest thing about it seemed her own ignorance of the cause of it all.

"Was there *no* one here with a mind big enough to be good to you, *whatever* your family may have done?" demanded Mrs. Armstrong, in pained perplexity.

"Well," said Liddy cautiously, "sometimes Mrs. Wagenhorst speaks to me when she sees me."

"A poor outlook for us and our work, Billy," sighed his wife.

"All the more need for us."

"But it will probably be beating against an impregnable stone wall to try to let in a bit of Christian light—for I'm beginning to see that Pennsylvania-Dutch obstinacy is almost, if not quite, as invulnerable as the Scotch brand."

"Well, at any rate," Mr. Armstrong said, in conclusion, "you are coming here for lessons. Three hours a week, commencing next Monday. And we'll *not* keep it a secret."

"You don't mind the talk it will give if the folks know it?" Liddy asked anxiously.

"No!" exploded Mr. Armstrong. "Not a——"

"Damn!" his wife supplied, as he pulled himself up.

"Thank you, Kit!"

"You're welcome. I'm always ready with those small favors. You see, Miss Fitzenberger, how necessary a wife is to a minister of the Gospel. I always do his cussing for him."

Liddy listened, wide-eyed with amazement—then laughed a rippling, delicious laugh that illumined her face. It was the first time in her life that she

had ever laughed at anything except what she had found in books.

CHAPTER VII.

For the first time in its history, Virginsburg was being stirred out of its deadness and shaken to its foundations. It was the unprecedented behavior of the new Lutheran minister, the only resident pastor of the village, and his wife, that was causing the sensation. In their youthful enthusiasm for "social uplift," they were taking the bull by the horns and attempting reforms and innovations that were having the effect of dividing the entire village into two hostile camps—the one very small camp in favor of being "uplifted," the other very large one violently opposed to it.

The sensation reached its fever point when it became known that "Reverend Armstrong and missus" were taking up with Liddy Fitzenberger and having her constantly at the parsonage, where the church members were forced to meet with and speak to her, Mrs. Armstrong even going so far as to go out walking on the street with her.

It was rumored that only Liddy's refusal of the pastor's urgent invitation to her to enter his Bible class, or join the choir, or herself teach a class, saved the people from the indignity of having to associate at Sunday school and church with a Fitzenberger. Even after a committee of influential ladies had called at the parsonage to explain to its inmates that to have their pastor and his wife on friendly, even intimate, terms with this daughter of an outcast household was not acceptable to the congregation—even this solemn warning had no effect whatever upon the Armstrongs, who actually used the occasion to administer a severe rebuke to the committee upon their "unchristian persecution of an innocent girl."

Now the Virginsburg church council

was accustomed to pastors who, in order to "hold down their jobs," truckled ignominiously to the dictates of the council; so this flouting of the council's wishes, whenever the minister didn't approve of them, was so phenomenal as to leave the council dumfounded—especially when it was found that their pastor was not financially dependent upon his "job," but had such a comfortable income of his own that he was returning every dollar of his "dear, cunning little salary"—as his wife was said to call it—to be spent in church improvements, or in this thing he called "social uplift"—which was nothing else, as far as most of the church members could see, than meddling in other people's business.

It was only the coöperation of a few of the better-educated people of the village that enabled the pastor to prosecute his work at all.

"We *must* give these people something to do and to think about besides household and shop drudgery—to keep the lives of the women from growing stale and stunted and that of the men from sinking into vice," Mr. Armstrong proclaimed, upheld in his contention by the two school-teachers of the town, the squire, the doctor, and the owner of the stocking factory.

Mr. Wagenhorst was one of the first to take his stand in the large hostile camp.

"You haven't the dare," he announced to Sally and his wife, "to join this here neighborhood association got up by reverend and his missus. It's all wrong. Let the preacher stick to his job of preachin' the Gawspel. It ain't his work to go runnin' up and down the street gettin' folks to 'tend such educative movin' pictures, and such public health lekshures by an Al-lentown college pefessor, or whoever, and patriotic carnivals in the school grounds, and even baby shows, yet! Yes, instead of tendin' to the Gawspel,

he's gettin' up a glee club and a Boy-Scout brigade, and—here's the limit! What do you think Brother Franz tol' me, here this afternoon, that this here neighborhood association was organizin'? A baseball team, yet! To entice our young men away from home to neglect their work! Ain't it, now, an outrage? If Reverend Armstrong can't be made to stop sich carryin'-on, he gets fired—or else I quit our membership!"

"But I'd like, anyhow, to tend the neighborhood-association literature class Friday evenin's," pleaded Sally. "It would be *somepin* out of the rut."

"I don't approve of them classes him and her gets up, that takes girls away from their own homes in the evenin's," affirmed her father. "Your place is here, where we know where you're *at*. You haven't the dare to tend nothin' but Wednesday-evenin' prayer meetin's."

Sally looked sullen and rebellious, but dared not protest.

"What's more," continued Mr. Wagenhorst, "I don't like the example reverend's missus has on the young. They say that, whilst she runs about all day busybodyin' with this here neighborhood association, and enticin' our other females to neglect their homes likewise, she's that lazy and good for nothin' at the parsonage, they say, that—mind you!—she leaves reverend carry in the spring water from the pump. Two lazy women there—her and that fancy colored lady with her cap or whatever on her head and all—and the *reverend* carryin' in the water! Yi, yi, yi!"

"They say," Sally corrected him, "that reverend only does that there when the colored lady has off on Thursday and Sunday afternoons. They say he wouldn't *leave* his wife do it. She darsent wait on herself any when he's by, that spoilt he's got her, yet! Why, there's them that seen him even jump up, a'ready, to pick up her

handkerchief fur her that she dropped! Ain't? Now, mind! Some thinks it's awful dudish, but Lizzie Franz says she heard it does give sich polite men in the South."

Sally's family had never before heard such a lengthy speech from her. Mr. Wagenhorst, too, had never before been so talkative. The Armstrongs were certainly waking up Virginsburg—though not entirely in the way they desired to do.

"Anyhow," said Mr. Wagenhorst, "him and her flyin' in the face of the feelin's of the congregation and of the whole town by takin' up with that Fitz-berger girl! Well, what that young preacher needs is to be showed what he *can't* do in Virginsburg, if he don't want to be fired off his job! The young highflyer thinks he can come out to the country and *run* us—as if we was hayseeds that didn't know nothin'! He'll have to get *learnt*, oncet!"

Mrs. Wagenhorst wondered in her heart whether her husband still remembered that slip of Elmer's about talking with Liddy in the post office; whether the memory rankled as a suspicion in his mind; and whether this was perhaps why he took such a decided stand against the new minister's espousal of the girl's cause. She herself, being earnestly religious and fond of the church, did hope that the strange doings of the new pastor would not drive her husband to the extremity of withdrawing the family from church membership, for churchgoing was her one pleasure in life, her only dissipation.

She hoped also that her own suspicion as to Elmer and Liddy was unfounded; or, if not, that by the time Elmer came home for the Christmas holidays, he would have recovered from his fancy. Had she remotely imagined the actual fact that, twice a week, thick letters passed between her

son and Liddy Fitz-berger, even her remarkable placidity would have been somewhat ruffled.

It was not long before the reforming pastor and his wife had got the village into such a state over their "reforms" that lifelong friends and neighbors passed one another on the street with faces averted.

"He's a member!"—meaning of the neighborhood association—was enough to damn any one in the eyes of the majority.

"She's an opposer!" was sufficient to break off all intercourse with a member.

The slogan of the association:

**COÖPERATE FOR VIRGINSBURG, THE
TOWN OF POSSIBILITIES!**

painted on signboards at either end of the village and in the "square," gave great offense to the opponents of the association. And the motto, circulated on red, heart-shaped cards, was regarded also as insulting:

**COMING TOGETHER IS A BEGINNING.
KEEPING TOGETHER IS PROGRESS.
WORKING TOGETHER IS SUCCESS.**

But it was a harmless and friendly little pamphlet, written and published by "Reverend Armstrong," enumerating a lot of unimportant, uninteresting, and uninteresting statistics about Virginsburg, that proved to be powder to this smoldering flame of passion over really nothing. The incendiary statements in the pamphlet that caused the conflagration were these:

The report shows that the average number of forced marriages annually in Virginsburg is exceptionally high. This is better than illegitimate births, but it reveals a sinfulness of life that reflects on the community.

We find that ninety-eight per cent of the population of Virginsburg springs from one common stock—the Pennsylvania German.

"Will you just look, oncet, at this

here!" Mr. Wagenhorst exclaimed, as he came into the kitchen, one evening, to his supper, carrying one of the offensive pamphlets. "Near every one in Wirginsburg, yet, has had over this here! Look what this Reverend Armstrong prints in here about us folks! We are *common*, he says! 'Ninety-eight per cent of the population,'" the farmer laboriously read from the pamphlet, "'springs from *one common stock*.' So! We are cattle! 'Stock,' he calls us, and 'common,' mind you! 'Common stocks'! Ach, how the folks is mad at his printin' out sich things about 'em! 'Common stock'! Yi, yi, yi! Yes, I bought this here pamphlet to send to Elmer. It cost me ten cents, but I don't begrudge the price. I want fur Elmer to see, oncet, what fur a preacher we got, anyhow—that defies his congregation and takes up with a Fitzenberger! Yes, Reverend Armstrong, he better hesitate and think a little which side his bread is buttered on, a'ready!"

"It wonders me," said Mrs. Wagenhorst regretfully, as she brought her husband a cup of hot coffee from the stove and offered him a plate piled high with homemade bread, "that Reverend Armstrong would call us names, yet! 'Common stock'! My, my!"

"But, pop," spoke up Henry, the second son, after a glance at the offending sentence, "it don't mean what you take out of it. 'Common stock'—that means the Pennsylvania Dutch."

"Well, I grant you the Pennsylvania Dutch is mebbly dumb," Mr. Wagenhorst sarcastically returned. "I ain't sayin' we're all so smart as what Reverend Armstrong is. But we ain't 'stock,' anyhow—or so wonderful 'common,' either, even if we ain't sich high people like him and his wife, to keep colored help and to talk so affected that way. Why, he calls 'tomato' 'tomah-toes'! It 'most makes me sick, the affected way he talks. Everybody you

meet on the street is jawin' about his slanderin' the folks that give him his livin', and callin' 'em 'common cattle.' And that ain't *all* he says about us, neither. Look at here!" He took the pamphlet, thumbed the pages, and read: "'The average-number of forced marriages in Wirginsburg is exceptionally high!' Sich *insults* he gives us, yet! For outsiders to read sich things about Wirginsburg! Ain't it *scand'lous*?"

"What fur does he have sich a spite at us?" Sally wondered.

"Yes, that's what we all are wonderin'! Well, this here settles it—I withdraw our membership till another preacher is elected. The council meets to-morrow night to take up this here pamphlet and pass on it, and I guess they'll pass the wote, then, to ast fur reverend's resignation. If they don't—and it seems there's a couple in the council that stands out *fur* him—then understand, mom—and you, Sally—no more goin' to church!"

Mrs. Wagenhorst, seating herself at her husband's side after having served him, looked down sadly at her plate as she cut her fried sausage. But she offered no protest.

Their son Henry deemed it safer not to press his explanation of the term "common stock," knowing that his father's mind would not be open to conviction from the dictionary itself.

Nothing could more effectually demonstrate the extent of the isolation of the Fitzenberger household than the fact that it was from one of Elmer's letters that Liddy learned of the sensation in the town over her association with the Armstrongs; the minister and his wife having refrained, of course, from any reference to it in her presence. Elmer wrote:

In Sally's last letter she told me how every one is wild against Reverend Armstrong and missus for giving you lessons. I would be so glad if they could break down the wicked prejudice against *you*, at least. It would

make it easier, later on, for me, for of course *some* time I'll have to have it out with my father. But I don't see why you want to take lessons. I think you know enough for a woman—more than I do, in some things. The letters you compose, compared to our Sally's, are something wonderful—and Sally went to school a year longer than you. I take

Elmer told of his lonesomeness, of his longing for her, of how he missed their talks and walks. He wrote:

If it were not for my work keeping me so busy day and night, I don't know how I'd bear it. But since I got the job of cleaning the college chapel twice a week, and opening up and sweeping out the Lutheran bookstore every morning—besides being chauffeur for the prof—and all my studies—well, I tell *you*, I don't lose any time! Liddy, do you know your letters sound more like a person talking than any letters I ever read? And I myself write to you just so *natural*, the way I never wrote to anybody. I guess it's selfish of me, Liddy, but I can't help hoping you are as lonesome for me as what I am for you.

A pen stroke had been drawn through the word "what."



"I guess they'll pass the vote, then, to ask for reverend's resignation. If they don't—then understand, mom—and you, Sally—no more goin' to church!"

notice you write good grammar, too, since you are taking those lessons. You can see for yourself, since we correspond, how much more correctly I can write than talk. I must say, though, Liddy, it looks, from Sally's letters, as if you wouldn't have your teachers long, so fierce the foolish people feel about it. And there's a lot of talk, Sally says, about asking Reverend Armstrong to give in his resignation. Isn't it awful the way the people of a little town can stick to a thing when they have no reason to?

Every letter Liddy received from

Liddy knew intuitively that this last sentence was prompted by a tinge of jealousy because of her enthusiasm about her new friends. Yet it was hard to imagine Elmer, kindly condescending as she had always felt that he considered himself in his relation to her, as feeling jealous of her.

He told her in one of his letters what a revelation to him his special lessons in English were:

I never knew before what a chump I am! Why, every other word I speak is what my teacher calls a "provincialism." It seems I don't talk anything *but* provincialisms! But you will be surprised, when I come home for Christmas, how straight I will talk, for I am learning fast. One thing the professor makes me do is to read aloud in my room at least a chapter a day of a good novel. Thackeray, he says, rather than Dickens, because there's so much low, vulgar dialogue in Dickens that wouldn't help me any.

Liddy was appalled at the news that her fears were realized for the fate of the Armstrongs in their daring to defy public opinion and associate with her.

"They are maybe *suffering* on account of me, and they never told me! Isn't that just like them, though?"

But she could not bear that it should be so. Without loss of time, after learning of the catastrophe, she started for the parsonage.

"To think Mr. Armstrong might even lose his church!" she thought, as she walked up the street. Her heart sank with the realization of what that would mean to her. "And to think that *I* would be the one to bring this on them, so kind as they've been to me!"

It was seven o'clock in the evening when she knocked at the parsonage door. Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong were having their after-dinner coffee upstairs in the minister's study, the cozy room in which Liddy always had her lessons. The little table, glistening with silver, at which Mrs. Armstrong, in a simple evening gown—Liddy thought her clothes very plain, but oddly fascinating—poured the savory coffee; the tiny china cups such as Liddy had never seen used except by little girls at play; the minister lounging in a big easy-chair before a crackling open fire—all of it seemed very novel and wonderful to the unsophisticated village maiden.

"A cup of coffee, Liddy?" Mrs. Armstrong asked, as Mr. Armstrong rose to give her his seat in the big arm-chair. The courteous little attentions

so instinctive with him were always thrilling to Liddy, who had never, even at Elmer's hands, had the experience of being treated chivalrously.

"Yes, thank you." She smiled, taking the cup from Mr. Armstrong's hand as he brought it to her from the table.

"What's the matter? You looked so troubled when you came in," said Mrs. Armstrong, as they all sat comfortably about the fire, sipping their coffee.

"And you looked so contented"—Liddy smiled—"that it seemed as if nothing and nobody *could* hurt you. But," she added, her brow again puckered anxiously, "I came round to tell you that I have just heard how the people disapprove of—of your associating with me, and that they might ask you, Mr. Armstrong, to give in your resignation, yet."

"There goes that 'yet' again, Liddy!" Mrs. Armstrong shook her finger at her pupil and protégée. It was understood between them that Liddy was to be "pulled up" in any slip she made. Just one month of this "pulling-up" process, together with Liddy's alert sensitiveness to what seemed to her the beauty of the unfamiliar Southern speech of the Armstrongs, had already so modified her Pennsylvania-Dutch accent and phraseology as to make her English almost free from glaring error.

Also, the atmosphere of kindness and refinement in this home, the point of view of the great outside world that its inmates held as to most things, their breadth of sympathy, and their absolute and sincere Christianity, were having their educative effect upon the receptive mind and heart of their young pupil.

"To relieve your anxiety, Liddy," Mr. Armstrong replied, "the church council met last night and thrashed out, in a two hours' quarrel, that I was to *stay*. The thing that saved me was not, I am sorry to say, their high opinion of my piety, but the fact that I was

offering to pay half my year's salary toward the necessary church repairs and improvements. Even this strong argument appealed to only *half* the council. The one odd vote in my favor was cast by Brother Baumgardner, with whose sick wife Kitty sat up all night several times when he had to be away at night work. So, you see, for the present we are quite safe. Although," he added, grinning, "it certainly did make some of those old fellows of the council pretty ill to realize that for once they had a pastor they didn't own body and soul because of the poor devil's dependence upon the salary they paid."

"I'm so glad we're to stay here," said Kitty, "for I should certainly hate to leave Virginsburg. It's the most exciting place I've ever lived in. Just think of having the town divided into two warring camps all on account of us! They didn't notice us like this in London and Paris and Berlin and New York. They didn't really care in those places whom we associated with, or how we pronounced our English, or whether I washed my own dishes or not. It's nice to be so important."

"Some of the church members, however," said Mr. Armstrong, a little sadly, "have left the church—the Wagenhorst family and the Gunzenhausers and the Schwabs and several others. It will weaken the church financially—but I will make up that deficit. Spiritually, I suppose, we are strengthened, for it is small good we could have done to those who see cause at this time for leaving the church."

"The Wagenhorsts—are they leaving the church on account of *me*?" Liddy feebly inquired.

"Partly because of our pamphlet," Mrs. Armstrong quickly returned. "It's really as blameless as you are, Liddy, though it's being treated as mercilessly."

"Your pamphlet?" Liddy vaguely repeated

"You don't mean to tell me," Mr. Armstrong asked incredulously, "that you haven't heard the ragings in this village over our pamphlet, Liddy?"

"No, you didn't speak of it," said Liddy.

"Liddy! Are you actually so isolated in this small place as to have escaped the violent rantings over 'one common stock'?"

"I haven't heard a word."

The Armstrongs looked from her to each other in dumb amazement.

"It makes me see it," said Mrs. Armstrong presently, "as nothing else could do!"

"Mrs. Armstrong"—Liddy suddenly leaned forward in her chair, her face coloring deeply—"has any one ever told you *why* I am so—isolated?"

"Oh, yes," Mrs. Armstrong returned lightly, though she also colored and glanced as if for help at her husband. "They've gossiped about it to us. But, oh, the *senselessness* of their taking it out on you!"

"Would you tell me, Mrs. Armstrong, what my parents did?"

Mrs. Armstrong put out her hand and laid it on Liddy's.

"Dear, it wouldn't do you any good to know. I'd much rather not tell you."

"Is it so horrible?"

"You'd better not want to know it."

"I can't believe it would be so hard to know the real thing as to be in this doubt and dread of what it *might* be. If you met my stepmother and could feel what I feel about her so often—a creeping horror——"

"Oh," Mrs. Armstrong breathlessly exclaimed, turning suddenly to her husband, "that's the way the first wife must have felt about her—to have been driven to doing what she did!"

"Sh—sh!" her husband checked her. "Liddy," he quickly spoke in, "I feel it my duty to call on your father and his wife. Their names are on our old church records—Mrs. Fitzenberger as

'Joye Miller.' Would it be acceptable to them, do you think, to have me call?"

"I don't know. No one has ever been to our house since I can remember. My father hardly ever speaks. I guess he wouldn't talk to you if you did come. And Joye—well, I don't know how she'd take it. But, Mr. Armstrong, I'm afraid that *that* the people *wouldn't* stand—your coming to our *house*!"

"My dear child, if I modeled my actions after what Virginsburgers expect of me, I'm afraid I'd be a *rara avis*!"

"Latin for 'rare bird,' Liddy." His wife threw off an explanation.

"So then you think," said Liddy timidly, "that you don't want to tell me what my parents did?"

Her friends looked at each other questioningly. For a moment they did not answer.

"Liddy," said the minister at last, "some day we will tell you all about it. Perhaps, after all, you ought to be told. But I confess I don't feel equal to it yet."

"But some day you *will* tell me?"

"I promise."

"All right, Mr. Armstrong, and thank you."

"By the way," Mrs. Armstrong inquired, "you said, when you came in, Liddy, that you had *heard* of the riot over our friendship for you. How did you hear of it? Has it come out in the Allentown newspapers?"

The question found Liddy so unprepared that she had all the appearance, for a moment, of a guilty, confused child.

"Will you look at her, Billy?" Mrs. Armstrong appealed to her husband. "Now what have you been up to, Liddy? Aha!" she exclaimed melodramatically. "William, I believe she has a secret lover! Oh, life in Virginsburg is *too* exciting! Confess your guilt, Liddy. For you look as if you'd just been caught robbing a bank."

"Worse!" declared Mr. Armstrong.

Liddy laughed, though she looked almost scared.

"You see, it's not *my* secret," she tried to explain. "I wouldn't have any secrets from you. But it's another person's secret that I darsent—may not—tell."

"But, Liddy, you've told me repeatedly that you never talk to a soul in this village but us—and your ignorance of our pamphlet proves it!"

"I don't, either. Anyhow, not now—not since you came. It was from a letter that I learned of the fuss."

"A correspondent! Does he live here?"

"Kit!" her husband protested. "If she doesn't want to tell!"

"I do want to—I'd love to!" said Liddy. "But, you see, if you'd let it out, it would go so hard for him."

"Him"—I thought so!" nodded Mrs. Armstrong. "I've wondered how the male, even as it's found in Virginsburg, could resist the appeal of those eyes of yours, Liddy! So he has to make love to you secretly?"

"I'd hardly think," said Liddy doubtfully, "that it was just to say making love. But we are good friends. And if his father heard of it, you see, he'd take him out of college."

"Wagenhorst's son!" exclaimed the minister. "The plot thickens!"

"Oh!" said Liddy, in a frightened whisper. "But we kept it such a secret! You will be careful, *won't* you, Mr. Armstrong, not to let it get out?"

"Of course I shall guard your secret. But I'm not sure I approve of a young man who hasn't the courage of a friendship that certainly does him honor."

"But what would be the use of his losing his chance of an education?" Liddy argued for Elmer. "His father would take him right out of college, and maybe even disinherit him."

"Yes, yes," granted Mr. Armstrong, "when one is dealing with such dis-

torted minds, one has to be diplomatic, I suppose."

"How will I ever tell Elmer that I let it out to you?" said Liddy anxiously.

"Why tell him? It would worry him quite needlessly," said Mr. Armstrong. "You know how safe your secret is with us, but *he* doesn't."

"To save him worry, then, I won't tell him," Liddy decided, with a sigh of relief. "And now," she added, "I can ask you a question that I couldn't ask you before on account of keeping Elmer's secret for him."

"What is it, Liddy?"

The anxious look came back into Liddy's eyes as she earnestly inquired:

"Do you think that Elmer will get so well educated at college that he won't care for me after a while?"

"Oh, Liddy, you can tell a college graduate by the size of his ears, mostly!" Mrs. Armstrong mocked.

"A son of Wagenhorst's outgrow you, Liddy?" said the minister. "It's more likely to work the other way, if you go on improving at your present rate of speed. *I'm* a college graduate, and it keeps me running to keep up with you!"

"Elmer is a very hard student," said Liddy, shaking her head doubtfully, "and he has a very bright mind. And he is very, very ambitious to make something great of himself."

"Don't worry!" Mrs. Armstrong reassured her. "Elmer won't outgrow you, I promise you—on my word of honor as a lady!"

CHAPTER VIII.

"I'm going to call on the Fitzenberger pair to-day, Kitty," the minister announced, a few days later.

"All right. I'm really a bit curious, I admit it—though rather horrified, too, at the idea of meeting that dreadful woman who, in the face of what had

happened, could go ahead and *marry* the man and then keep on living here as serenely as if nothing had ever happened! Isn't it remarkable? Yes, I'm quite curious to see her."

"But you are not going to see her. Do you suppose I'd think of taking you into that woman's house?"

"Oh! I, too, must not visit the home of Liddy? Is Virginsburg getting into *your* blood, my dear?"

"You can't call on Mrs. Fitzenberger."

"Very well, if it would shock your prejudice. It *is* prejudice, you know. I'm as safe as you from contamination. I can go quite safely wherever you can. Remember, we're suffragists, you and I."

"I?"

"Certainly. Do you suppose I'd let you *not* be?"

"But, Kitty, listen! It isn't well to shock *needlessly* the feelings of these people we are trying to serve. It would neither do any good nor uphold any principle for *you* to call on Mrs. Fitzenberger. Your taking up with little Liddy—that's a different matter."

"Even the most modern of men," Mrs. Armstrong sighed, "are still deeply imbued with the delusion that they must safeguard women from evil—when really we women are all the time trying to safeguard *you* from wickedness. However—I'll let you go alone."

The Fitzenbergers' door, though the only one in Virginsburg that was never approached by friend or neighbor, was the only one that had a bell—an electric one, at that. When, at four o'clock that afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. Fitzenberger were sitting together in the sitting room, the man dozing in his chair and his wife reading a novel, the unaccustomed sound, pealing through the house as the button at the door was pressed, startled and agitated them both.



"Now, what have you been up to, Liddy? Aha!" she exclaimed melodramatically. "William, I believe she has a secret lover!"

"Who can be comin'?" quavered Joye, closing and laying down her book, but making no move to answer the bell. "Mebby such an agent or whatever?"

"Better go see," Mr. Fitzenberger hoarsely suggested, sitting up rigidly in his chair.

"But agents always come on the mornin' train and leave on the noon train. It can't be no agent," said his wife.

"Don't they never come on the trolley?"

"No, it goes too slow fur 'em."

"Where's Liddy?"

"She's went in to Allentown to fetch out the groceries."

"You better answer the bell."

"If I knew who it is——" Another louder, more insistent ring brought her slowly to her feet. "I can't think who it could be."

Mr. Fitzenberger's rigidity relaxed, and he sank back limply in his chair.

"I wisht I knew who it is," repeated Joye.

Her husband did not answer.

"Well, if I must go, I guess, then, I must."

It was for the first time in fourteen years that Mrs. Fitzenberger now opened her door to a visitor. The stranger on the step who confronted her had to look at her through so inhospitably narrow a space that he found it embarrassing to announce himself.

"This is Mrs. Fitzenberger?" he asked, lifting his hat and speaking vaguely at the crack at which she held open the door, only a narrow strip of her face and figure being visible.

"Well?" she asked tentatively. "What's wanted?"

"I am Mr. Armstrong, the Lutheran pastor. I've come to call on Mr. and Mrs. Fitzenberger."

To have a man, while he spoke to her, respectfully hold his hat from his head—saluting her, as it were—was so novel and agreeable an experience to Mrs. Fitzenberger that she stared, fascinated, tongue-tied.

"They are at home?" Mr. Armstrong patiently inquired.

"Well, yes, sir," Joye admitted, opening the door a bit wider, but still barring the way. "But Liddy, she ain't here. She's went to Allentown over, fur to fetch out the groceries."

"But I've come to call on Mr. and Mrs. Fitzenberger. They are at home, you say?"

Joye reluctantly made way for him to enter.

"Just to step in, then."

He held out his hand to her as he came into the narrow hall.

"You are Mrs. Fitzenberger?"

"Yes, sir, I'm missus."

She smiled blandly as she placed her plump, white, jeweled hand in his. She was suddenly sure that, unknown to her, this polite gentleman had been observing her, admiring her, and, having found her entirely irresistible, had dared the contumely of the town to call on her.

"Come right on in," she said in

honeyed tones, as she now quite graciously opened the parlor door.

Mr. Armstrong's appraising eye noted, as she preceded him into the room, her comeliness, her fancy apparel, her sinuous walk.

"And your husband?" he asked as they sat down. "Surely I may see him, too?"

"Well, my mister, he was feelin' to-day so all over funny I'll have to ast you fur to excuse him."

"I'm sorry for that. I'm anxious to meet him."

"*Him* you are anxious to meet?" she softly inquired, her head tilted coquetishly.

"Both of you. Your names are on our church books."

"Yes, well, but anyhow, mister, he ain't much fur sociability that way."

"And you are?"

"Well"—she looked at him insinuatingly—"it depends on who is my caller. It gives such common people here in Wirginburg, I don't associate with them. They are so Dutch that some can hardly speak English any more. And yet, for all, they want to be so much. But me—'my mind is my kingdom.' That's a motto I come acrost oncet, and I think it's so true. Yes, I purfur my books and my own poems," she added, with an all-embracing complacency. "'My mind is my kingdom.' It's such a pretty motto, ain't?"

"Your own poems? You write poems, do you mean?"

"Yes, sir. I'm a poetess." She rose to bring from the center table a tablet of paper. "This here's one I composed yesterday, a'ready."

She sat down, cleared her throat, and, with a self-absorption that did not in the least feel the attitude of her auditor, she read—with manifestly the keenest pleasure and satisfaction to herself—her latest creation:

"LINES ON A LADY'S VISIT TO A
FORMER LADY FRIEND.

"On a summer eve a lady strayed.
In charity perchance, a call she paid.

"Her host in other days she had known.
She found her in sadness, neglect, and forlorn.

"Happy, oh, how happy once was she!
Oh, how great a change she did see!

"Now she was married, wan and pale,
The story of many an oft-told tale.

"There squalor and penury and want and
misery
Stalked as handmaids in full mastery.

"Her husband to her unkind and poor.
No cheer was there, and bare was the floor.

"As long as the aunt's bounty did last,
They had drove a pace exceedingly fast.

"Once they most lavishly did entertain,
Now one room all their furniture doth contain.

"Now they sit upon the stool of repentance,
Bewailing their want of sustenance.

"They drank the cup of violence;
Now they eat the bread of bitterness.

"And my lady fair in silence withdrew,
And in pity bade her former friend adieu."

Laying the tablet on her ample lap,
she looked up expectantly, entirely confident, evidently, of her hearer's surprised admiration.

Mr. Armstrong, whose face was flushed, was piously thanking God in his heart that Kitty was not with him. Mrs. Fitzenberger's poem, read in Kitty's presence, would, he knew, have been too much for his self-control. He and his wife were finding it more impossible every day to make pastoral calls together.

"Thank you, Mrs. Fitzenberger," he managed to murmur.

"Oh, that's all right," Joye graciously returned. "I think it is such a touching piece, ain't it?"

"Very, indeed."

"Yes, it comes wonderful easy to me to write off pieces like them, I got such a good vocabulary. I guess you took notice to that whilst I was readin' to you. I often says to mister, 'Dear only knows what I might uv made of myself—mebby such a Mrs. Hemans or Ella Wheeler Wilcox—if I hadn't uv loved.' But"—she sighed—"woman's nature is so soft and yielding that way—and mister, he always said he wouldn't take no answer but the *right* answer. 'The *right* answer is the only answer I take,' he would say still, and he stuck so to it that he would take only the right answer that what could I *do*, anyhow, but give in to him? And, indeed, for all we're married together, now, for fourteen years, he's that crazy after me yet that— Well, reverend, you can't think how jealous he'll act for a couple days, now, after *you* stoppin' in this here way."

"I'll call again when he doesn't feel so—'funny,' did you say?—and show him how harmless I am, in spite of my awful reputation in this village."

Joye's colorless eyes opened at these words with a look of really seeing him, her usually self-absorbed manner making her appear as blind to others as if she were indeed physically sightless.

"What's that you say, reverend?"

"About my awful reputation? My pamphlet, you know, and all my reforms and innovations. Mine and Mrs. Armstrong's."

As he saw how unenlightened she looked, he realized, with the same shock Liddy had given him in revealing her ignorance of the village sensation, how tragically isolated was this unfortunate household.

"Mrs. Fitzenberger," he asked suddenly, "since you don't seem to admire or care for Virginsburg, why do you stay here? I understand your husband is retired from business. You are not obliged to stay?"

"Yes, well, but mister, he won't do it to move. And me, it makes me nothin' where I live at. 'My mind is my kingdom,' Liddy, she often wanted to move, a'ready. But mister, he sayed no; since it didn't make *me* nothin' where we lived at, here he would stay. To be sure, if I sayed somethin' about movin'—well, reverend, the words would hardly be out of my little mouth till mister would be sendin' fur the movin' van. He'd put his two hands under me fur to walk on."

"It would give Liddy a better chance, you know, if you lived—well, in a larger place. She's a very bright girl, Mrs. Fitzenberger. She ought to have every possible chance."

"Well, you see, it's just fur an excuse to put all the housework off on me that she gets her pop to leave her take lessons off of you." Joye serenely stated the case as impersonally as if discussing the weather. "To be sure, if I sayed the word to mister, he wouldn't leave her take lessons off of you and let all the work on me. But that one little word to mister—I will not speak it," she added, with a martyrlike sweetness.

"Of course you won't. We older people must not be selfish. The young have a right to the best chance we can give them."

Joye's full lips tightened, and her eyes looked very still. To be classed as "we older people"! To have her noble self-sacrifice taken as her stepdaughter's due!

"How about its learnin' Liddy to be selfish, reverend?" she gently asked. "It worries me sometimes that I'm raisin' her too selfish that way—me workin' so hard fur a child that ain't my own flesh and blood, drudgin' at menial tasks and goin' agin' all my refined instinks, whilst my stepdaughter is off takin' sich private lessons, yet. Mister, he can't get over it. 'Joye,' he says, 'I think there never was sich a

noble lady as what you are—but you're *too good*!" He can't speak enough about it."

"That's very nice—to have him so appreciate your nobility. Eh—Liddy's lessons at my house being in the evenings, Mrs. Fitzenberger, just what is the heavy household drudgery you do at that time—may I ask? You see, in Virginia, where I come from, nobody does housework in the evening, so I'm curious to understand."

"Well, you see, it lets the bread fur me to set and the clothes fur me to sprinkle. And then all day she's settin' round studyin'. But I don't complain. To mister, I don't say nothin'. One word from my lips—and he'd stop the lessons. But I just try to hide from him how tired his little sweetheart gits, doin' up all the work alone. Sometimes it worries me, though, that I'm raisin' Liddy so selfish, and I wonder if I'm doin' *right*. What do you say, reverend?"

"Well, Mrs. Fitzenberger, you say your mind is your kingdom; so you must realize, as your inferiors would not, the value to your husband's daughter of an education. I've sometimes feared Liddy was overtaxing herself—with her hard studying, her frequent trips to Allentown, and," he deliberately added, "her heavy household work."

Again Mrs. Fitzenberger looked at him with a slightly tightened set of her lips and a queer deadness in her pale eyes.

"Didn't you take notice, reverend, to what I tol' you a'ready about her lettin' all the work fur me?"

"I understand your generous desire to *have* her do that—and right you are—but Liddy naturally wouldn't allow you to, as I know from so frequently seeing her at work when I pass here—washing windows, scrubbing the front steps, hanging out the wash. Then, the week our cook was ill, she daily brought us samples of her good

cooking and helped us to stave off starvation until our cook recovered."

"She tol' you it was *her* cookin', did she, reverend?" Mrs. Fitzenberger asked softly.

"She's a first-class little cook," Mr. Armstrong affirmed, with enthusiasm.

"Yes," said Joye, slowly nodding, "them's her underhanded ways—passin' off fur *hern* all them nice things I sent over to you and missus. Well, don't it, now, beat all? Yes, she's got you good fooled. Why, reverend, whenever she gives a good guess that you are goin' to pass our house soon, down goes her book, and up she snatches a rag, and out she runs to rub at a window or make she's scrubbin' the front or whatever."

"Also," continued Mr. Armstrong, as if Mrs. Fitzenberger had not spoken, "while our cook was ill, Liddy insisted upon cleaning up the kitchen one evening for Mrs. Armstrong, who had got it into an awful mess, so unused she is to coping with a contingency like a cookless kitchen. But poor Liddy's hard work met with a poor reward, for when Mrs. Armstrong took one look at the shining spotlessness of that kitchen, she could only shake her head in despair.

"'Liddy,' she said, 'I'm not used to a kitchen like this. We don't have them in the South. I'm sorry to tell you that, before I can possibly feel at home in it, I shall have to mess it up a bit.'"

Mr. Armstrong rose, as he concluded this yarn, and held out his hand. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Fitzenberger, not to have met your husband. If at any time I can be of use to you, be sure to command me. And——"

He hesitated. He could not conclude this call with the formula he used upon other delinquents in church attendance: "I hope we may see you hereafter at our regular services," since he almost agreed with the villagers that the pres-

ence of the Fitzenbergers in the church would contaminate it. And even if he had not shared this theologically unsound view with his parishioners, he knew well that the church members would not tolerate their presence. Also, he was too sincere to waste empty words in asking this woman and her guilty mate to do what they would not, and, indeed, could not do.

"I shall always be glad to help you in any way I can, Mrs. Fitzenberger," he concluded.

On his walk home, he wondered whether it was because of what he had been told of Mrs. Fitzenberger's history, or whether it was actually her personality, that had made his very flesh creep under the sound of her dulcet tones speaking lies, and her full red lips smiling relentless cruelty.

"What a tragic thing for Liddy, with her natural fineness, to have had to live all these years under the shadow of such a treacherous, poisonous presence! How has the girl possibly remained so wholesome herself—and so lovely?"

CHAPTER IX.

Young Mrs. Armstrong felt it a burden upon her over-energetic conscience that she had lived in Virginsburg four months without having once lifted her voice in behalf of the great cause of suffrage, which she had warmly espoused and which was to be decided in Pennsylvania in the fast-approaching November election. So, one fine day late in October, she fared boldly forth on a canvass of the town.

"Shall you dare to call on the people who are down on us and our neighborhood association?" her husband had asked her at breakfast.

"Since *you* call on them, dear, why shouldn't I?"

"I'd hate to have you subjected to the rude treatment I get from them."

"But I'm really less sensitive than

you are, if the truth were known. For the sake of the cause, I can stand it."

"But, my dear, I don't believe you'll accomplish anything. And the idea of these crude village men being uncivil to you——"

"Oh, I shan't put myself open to rudeness from the *men*. I'm really not quite equal to that—for they seem to have not the least chivalry to women here. I shall talk to the wives, and ask them to use their 'indirect womanly

influence' to get their husbands to give them, in place of it, a little direct power."

"You'll only waste your time."

"No—for I shall have got it off my conscience. I feel I *ought* to do it. The election is next month, remember. Isn't it *exciting*?"

"I'm feeling remarkably calm about it myself," the minister had laughed.

But though the genuine anxiety as to his wife's experiences at the hands of those of their enemies whom she might approach made it hard for him to fix his mind on the sermon he tried to write that morning in his study, his apprehensions never imagined such treatment of a lady—a mere slip of a girl, and a pretty and appealing one at that—as Mrs. Armstrong actually received.

It took all the courage the plucky little woman could muster not to give



Mr. Armstrong was piously thanking God in his heart that Kitty was not with him.

up and go home after some of her worst rebuffs. She was sure that, in one or two instances, if she had not quickly retreated, she would have been subjected to physical violence. At many houses, the door was shut in her face the moment she was recognized. At others, she was favored with "a piece of my mind" before the door was closed on her.

"Takin' up with them Fitzenbergers and then expectin' to associate with nice folks! No, you needn't come smilin' round here. Us, we got no use fur you *nor* reverend."

"What fur a cheek have you got anyhow, comin' to see us after sich *insults* as you and reverend give us, yet? Printin' it out in a pam-plet that we are immoral in Wirginsburg, and callin' us sich ugly names! If we are sich cattle and so common, what fur do you come to see us, heh? A body'd think 'common stock' wasn't good enough to associate with sich fine folks as what yous are!"

At many houses they gave her no opportunity to state the object of her call.

"No, we have nussing to do with you and your neighborhood association. You kin just pass on! Runnin' with them Fitzenbergers and then talkin' about upliftin' *us*! Huh!"

"We are just as good as you or anybody else and we ain't takin' it off of you that you come here and tell us what's what! We don't need no 'social uplift' or whatever. Well, I guess anyhow *not*! Not from friends of them Fitzenbergers anyways, and from folks that calls us low cattle!"

Even when she obtained a hearing, the two obstacles to accomplishing anything for her cause were a profound ignorance of it and an utter indifference to it.

"I am a member of the Woman Suffrage Party," she would quickly announce, as soon as a door was opened,

to avert a misconception as to the object of her visit. "I want to interest you in woman suffrage."

"Well, but my eatin's are on the table, and mister is soon home from work. You must excuse me."

"Certainly. May I call later and talk with you?"

"Ach, it ain't worth while. It's somesing I don't bother about."

"But maybe if you understood it——"

"No, I don't take no interest in it. I don't know what it is, right."

"If you would let me call later and explain——"

"No, I don't bother with somepin like that. I ain't got the time."

Over and over again she received the same discouraging replies: "I don't bother with that," or, "I don't take no interest in it."

In most cases, they didn't know what she was talking about, her statement that she was a member of the Woman Suffrage Party being met with the astonished inquiry, "*What* are you now?" and her explanation, "A suffragist. Votes for women, you know," receiving a blank "It's new to *me*!"

"Don't you read of it in the newspapers?"

"I don't read much paper. I ain't got the time. I don't read nothin'. Ach, well, sometimes the comic section."

But when at last, in her canvass of the town, she reached the home of the village piano teacher, whose aluminum-hued gate proclaimed in raised aluminum letters the legend, "Emma S. Knerr, Piano-ist," she picked up hope.

"Surely," she thought, "a 'piano-ist' will have at least *heard* of suffrage."

But Miss Emma S. Knerr, a plain little spinster who did not look as if the "harmony of sweet sounds" could ever really stir her, proved as unenthusiastic as the rest.

"No"—she shook her head mournfully—"I don't like it."

"You 'don't like' woman suffrage?" Mrs. Armstrong patiently inquired.

"No, I don't like it."

"Would you mind telling me why?"

Miss Knerr was perfectly ready with her reasons.

"Well, look at how much worse the world is than what it used to be—with all them divorces you can read about, and all these here new diseases comin' in! And I think it's these here suffrage parties that makes the trouble. Why, look at how poor the schools is to what they used to be! The children that comes here to take lessons off of me, they don't get learned their *letters*, yet, at school. They can't tell A from Chee."

"That's only because a new and improved method of teaching reading is now used, Miss Knerr. And it has really nothing to do with suffrage or——"

"No," broke in Miss Knerr, again shaking her head dolefully, "I ain't fur it. They would drink anyhow."

"What?"

"Yes, they would. It ain't that I'm fur drunkards. No, a drunkard comin' near me ain't welcome. But still I don't believe in wotin' liquor away. I'm strickly opposed against it. Anyhow, missus," she ended conclusively, making a movement to close her door, "you and reverend have pleased the people wery bad with the way you called 'em 'common' and printed how they ain't nothin' but cattle. So you must excuse me if I don't want to hold no more conversation *with* you."

Mrs. Armstrong's face was crimson, though she still held up her head, as she passed out through the aluminum-hued gate labeled, "Emma S. Knerr, Piano-ist."

At the next house at which she inquired, "Are you interested in woman suffrage?" she was told, "No, I ain't

got no trouble with mister, so I don't bother with it."

"But for the sake of other women who may have trouble with their husbands?" Mrs. Armstrong suggested.

"That ain't none of my affairs."

"But shouldn't we be public-spirited and help one another?"

"I don't bother with other folks' business. I kin 'tend to my own business. Leave others do as they please."

"Do you think," Mrs. Armstrong suddenly asked, "that if I got a good talker to come out and make a suffrage speech here, the people would go to hear her?"

"Not while the medicine show is here, anyhow."

The "medicine show," which had been held every night for a week in the village square by a man with long hair, a Vandyke beard, and a Buffalo Bill hat, had proved so enticing as to keep even the few adherents of the neighborhood association from assembling.

"After the medicine show is over," Mrs. Armstrong persisted, "do you think they would come to hear a suffrage talk?"

"If it had anythin' to do with that there neighborhood association, I don't think the folks would 'tend," the woman said doubtfully.

"Perhaps you can give me a bit of information. I have been quite unable so far to interest any of the women of Virginsburg in suffrage. How about the men? Your own husband, for instance?"

"Well, you see, my husband, he's a man. He ain't fur it."

This seemed too conclusive to admit of argument, so Mrs. Armstrong gave it up and passed on.

At the next house, she changed her tactics a little.

"Is your husband interested in suffrage?" she asked.

"Well," the housekeeper tentatively returned, "he's a Republican."

"But is he in favor of women's voting?"

"Yes, well, that I don't know."

"You never talked to each other of the suffrage question?"

"Ach, no. You see, what political is, or what it ain't, we never talked about. My mister, he don't even see why *men* want to bother to wote."

At only one house was her knock at the door answered by a man.

"Well, well, now," he said when he had learned what the visitor wanted, "are the women still gassing about that there suffrage? I thought that there had all blowed over."

"No, we're still alive. Will you vote for us next month?"

"No, indeed I won't!"

"Why not?" Mrs. Armstrong demanded indignantly.

"Why not? For the reason that women are agin' liquor and I am *fur* it. That's why not!"

"Your reason does honor to our cause," she affirmed, as, in departing, she metaphorically shook the dust of his step from off her shoes.

She was surprised to receive, at the next place she stopped, the startlingly intelligent reply:

"No, I'm an anti."

"Are you? Why?" she asked encouragingly.

"Well, you see," the woman replied confidentially, "there for a while, mister, he was in politics. He was in 'em thick. So then I seen how corruptin' to the morals politics is. So I'm an anti."

At last, however, she reached a house near the end of the village street, where her announcement of herself as a woman suffragist seemed to arouse a lively interest.

"*What* are you now?" repeated the wiry, energetic little woman who confronted her in the doorway.

"A suffragist," Mrs. Armstrong mechanically repeated. She had reached the pass, now, where she worked without hope or spirit, simply to appease her conscience.

But the sprightly, small woman turned abruptly and called shrilly toward the back of her hall:

"Girls! Come on here, oncet! Here's a *suffra-kit*!" Then, turning back to Mrs. Armstrong, "Come on in the parlor. The girls is just home from normal to spend Sabbath and they'll want to see a *suffra-kit*, yet!"

It was the first invitation she had had during the morning to "come in," and she most gratefully accepted it—not because she hoped anything from it, but that she was so tired she would have had to sit down on some one's doorstep if she had not been offered a chance to sit on a chair.

Mrs. Weitzel led her into a pitch-dark parlor, which, when a bit of light had been admitted, revealed the usual crowded furnishings of heavy upholstered chairs and sofa, a superabundance of ornaments and tidies and sofa cushions, and the invariable scalloped-paper lambrequins on the mantel and under a clock shelf.

As Mrs. Armstrong sank exhausted upon the sofa, restraining her inclination to stretch out flat, Mrs. Weitzel seated herself alertly on the edge of a chair and eyed her with frank, eager curiosity, while her two heavy, bashful daughters, who had slyly slunk into the room, sat in the background and stared in silence at the visitor's costume.

"So you're a *suffra-kit*! I never seen one before!" exclaimed the mother. "This is reverend's missus, girls," she explained to her daughters with animation. "And to think she's a *suffra-kit*, too! Yes, you kin read about 'em in the *New York Journal*."

"And what do you think about them? I mean about suffrage," Mrs. Arm-

strong asked, feeling too languidly comfortable on the big sofa to exert herself even for the cause.

"Well, to be sure, I am kind of in favor of it—that I am. I say, still, to pop and the girls, 'If you set down and listen to it, it ain't no more'n right, that it ain't.'"

"And your husband—will he vote for it next month?"

"Well, he's pretty stubborn-headed that way. Mebby if you was to explain him the arguments— Can you talk Pennsylvania Dutch?"

"No."

"*Can't* you, now?" said Mrs. Weitzel compassionately. "That's hard, too, ain't? Pop, he can't talk much English. Yes, this town gives a lot of people that can't speak no English—and sich a stylish town as they want tō be, yet! Well, I still say to pop, 'If women dare vote, the saloons come away, and it won't go as it goes now,' I still say. I'm right *fur* it!"

"It ain't woman's business to neglect her family and go runnin' to the polls," spoke up the elder of the two girls dogmatically.

"It ain't so far to the polls," retorted her mother.

"The women that run off after politics are likely to have cobwebs in their houses," insisted her daughter.

"Better have cobwebs in your houses than in your brain," was her mother's response. "Now yous girls listen on the lady tell about it, and mebby, then, you'll have an easier idea of what it *is*."

Mrs. Armstrong, thus challenged, talked quite eloquently of the advantages to the home, and hence to the State, of woman's political freedom.

"You have right!" Mrs. Weitzel eagerly agreed with her when she paused for breath. "Indeed, that I will give you. I like your motto."

"My motto?"

"Your beliefs, I mean—about canned

goods and plumbin' and the schoolhouse bein' unsanitarium, and all like that."

"Well, then, if you can influence your husband to sign this slip," Mrs. Armstrong concluded, rising and laying some yellow blanks on a marble-topped center table, "I shall feel I've not worked in vain this morning."

Rested and refreshed by Mrs. Weitzel's kindly sympathy, Mrs. Armstrong felt fortified for her last call, which happened to be a formidable one, as she had now reached the last home at the extreme southern border of the town—the Wagenhorst farm.

Knowing, from her husband's experiences with Mr. Wagenhorst, how bitter an enemy he was to them and all that they represented, even *her* indomitable courage would have faltered at the idea of an encounter with him, and she never would have stopped here had she not counted on seeing only the mother and daughter of the household. So when, in walking around to the back of the house, her knock at the front having brought no response, she suddenly found herself confronting the stalwart, harsh-featured farmer, who, just after his noon dinner, was taking a drink at the pump, she felt caught in an unpleasant trap.

In an instant, however, she saw to her relief that he didn't know who she was. That gave her a little chance, at least, to escape rudeness at his hands.

"This is Mr. Wagenhorst?" she began rather breathlessly.

"I'm him."

"Could I interest you in——"

"Naw, I never buy nothin' off of such agents. You needn't waste your time nor mine."

"I'm not an agent. I'm a member of the Woman Suffrage Party."

"*What's* that?"

"The Woman Suffrage Party."

"Huh! *Fur* woman's wotin', heh?"

"Yes."



He looked down again at the girlish figure on the bench. "Understand this, missus. Us Wagenhorsts, we can't be 'improved' by some one that runs with them Fitzenbergers."

"Look-a-her! Wotin' ain't nothin' fur the women. It's an *untruth*. Anyhow, the women are all so big-mouthed, they'd scrap over the politics."

"As men never do," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"What's more," he argued oratorically, ignoring her remark, "if a woman can vote, then she must go to the war and fight."

"That doesn't follow. Clergymen and old men and invalids don't have

to go to war, yet they are not disfranchised on that account."

"That's different. But if women wote, they must go to the war and fight."

"Then every man that can't fight must be disfranchised."

"No, that's different. To be sure, it gives some men that can't fight. Yet we must anyhow leave them wote. But if women wote, they must fight."

"Why?"

"Why? Because if they want men's rights, they must do men's work. If they wote, they must fight."

"There'd be just as much sense in saying to you, a farmer, 'You can't vote unless you're willing to be a policeman.' You might not be fitted to be a policeman, yet you might be perfectly fitted to vote wisely."

"That's different, too, again. But if the women want to wote, they must fight."

"Yes—you did tell me that."

"Why, certainly. It stands to reason. If the women can't go to war and fight, then they can't wote."

"And if men can't got to war, then they can't vote," stubbornly repeated Mrs. Armstrong.

"No, that's altogether different. But the women can't wote if they can't fight in war."

"Don't you *know* that our only disfranchised citizens are the men of the army and navy?" she triumphantly put it to him.

"Yes, well, but if the women want to wote, they can't say they won't go to war and fight."

"If you say that again!" she snapped at him, utterly exasperated. "Can't you stick to a point? If *women* can't vote because they can't fight in war, then why may *men* vote who can't fight? *Stick to your point!*"

"I *am* stickin' to it—if the women want to wote, they must go to war."

Little Mrs. Armstrong glared at him for an instant as if she were going to scratch him; then, suddenly overcome with helpless laughter, she sank upon the bench of the porch.

"Oh, well, Mr. Wagenhorst, I promise we *will* go to war and fight if you'll sign this paper. Anything—anything—to get your vote!" she laughed, holding out the blank.

"So long as you don't go to war *till* I sign it, a'ready, I guess you stay safe at your home. What fur, anyhow, do

your parents leave a young girl like you run round away from home, after such foolishness like this here? I know you are a stranger in Wirginsburg, fur I ain't familiar with you. Is it that you earn your livin' off the suffrage parties doin' this?"

Before she could reply, Mrs. Wagenhorst's tall, straight figure appeared in the kitchen door, and at sight of Mrs. Armstrong, whom she had met often at church, she came forward with outstretched hand, her manner of quiet dignity contrasting almost grotesquely with the crude, gruff forcefulness of her husband's tone and bearing.

"Pleased to see you," said the farmer's wife gently. "Won't you come in and set a while?"

"It ain't worth while that she takes up your time, mom, fur she's sich a suffra—what you call it?—fur women's wotin', and I did tell her a'ready what I think about it," Mr. Wagenhorst interposed.

"But your wife hasn't told me what *she* thinks about it," smiled Mrs. Armstrong, realizing that Mrs. Wagenhorst's greeting of her did not suggest to the farmer's dull observation a suspicion as to who she was or the fact that they had met before.

"When you know what *I* think," affirmed Mr. Wagenhorst, "you're got all you'll git at this here house."

"If those are your one-sided views, I certainly do need to talk to your wife. Thank you, Mrs. Wagenhorst, I *will* come in and sit a while."

But Mrs. Wagenhorst made no move to lead the way.

"I guess mebby it ain't worth while, fur all. You see, mister, he's so opposed against this here suffrage."

"And what's *your* opinion?" Mrs. Armstrong insisted upon considering this, also, important.

"I didn't just think about it. But I guess this world was so long without women wotin', it can go to the end.

You see, we can't rule our heavenly Father. The way He makes it, so it must go, and He didn't make it that women should wote."

"But I think, at next month's election, our heavenly Father is going to 'make it' that women do vote."

"Ach, well, if so it goes, then so it goes," she answered resignedly. "That's what I always say—'Just the way it goes, so it goes,' I always say. And then I don't bother no more."

"And aren't you the least bit interested in the coming election?"

"No," she placidly replied. "I don't care how you make it, Mrs. Armstrong. It's all one to me."

But at the sound of her name on his wife's lips, Mr. Wagenhorst turned upon her almost violently, his face and neck flushed with anger.

"Mrs. *Armstrong*, did you say, mom? This here *girl*?"

He planted his great frame directly in front of the small figure on the bench and glowered upon her threateningly, while she, courageously looking up into his crimson face, thought to herself:

"If he actually struck out at me, no doubt his wife would think it her wifely duty to acquiesce and say, 'As it goes, so it goes!'"

"So—o!" drawled Mr. Wagenhorst derisively. "So this is reverend's missus! That's runnin' round this here willage tryin' to improve us all—and learn us ignoramuses all we don't know—instead of stayin' at home, like our wives and daughters do, and tendin' to her mister's house and meals! She hires a colored lady to do *her* work, ain't? while she tends to other people's business. And sich a woman sets up to teach our hard-workin' females how to 'improve.' Huh! Now leave me tell you somepin, missus! Don't you come round *here* again with your foolish talk!" He turned to his wife. "Do you hear, mom? She ain't to come

round here no more with this talk of women's wotin' and whatever. First thing you know, our *Sally'll* be wantin' to go runnin' to the polls—like she wanted to be runnin' to them classes of the neighborhood association. We're got trouble enough with our *Sally*."

He looked down again at the girlish figure on the bench.

"Understand this, missus. Us Wagenhorsts, we can't be 'improved' by some one that runs with them Fitzenbergers."

"Liddy is the only Fitzenberger we 'run with.' What wrong did *she* ever do? And where's your Christian charity?"

Mrs. Wagenhorst looked a bit surprised that any one would "talk back" to her "mister" like that.

"My Christian charity!" repeated Mr. Wagenhorst indignantly. "How about *yourn*—when you print out in a pam-plet that us folks in Wirginsburg, we are sich 'common stock'? Callin' us stock, yet! If we are so common—nothin' but *cattle*—it wonders me that you and reverend would be willin' to get your livin' off of us!"

"Fortunately, we don't get our living 'off of' you," said Mrs. Armstrong, rising, and not at all realizing how sharp a thrust she gave in this simple statement, unprecedented in the annals of the church at Virginsburg. For the church council, in its relation to their comparatively "well-fixed" pastor, felt itself to be like a bee without a sting, a cat without claws, a terrier without a bark.

"I'm opposed *against* you and reverend," Mr. Wagenhorst declared. "He ain't got no proper ideas of his saked callin'. What does he up and do, yet? He announces *from the pulpit* the games of the *Sunday-school baseball team*. Disrespectin' the pulpit by talkin' of a baseball game! And what fur does he come here corruptin' our town by gittin' up a baseball team to tempt

our boys from their work at home? Since when is it a preacher's job to git up baseball teams? Next thing he will have a Lutheran gamblin' club or a Christian Endeavor dance hall. Yes, I am glad of this chancet to tell you and your mister, oncet, what I think of yous. I don't think nothin' of yous! And so long as yous is in Wirginsburg, us Wagenhorsts, we don't go to church. Not unlesst you change your ways and stop runnin' with them Fitzenbergers—and tendin' to things that it ain't the business of a Gawspel minister to tend to."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Wagenhorst looked to see the little wife of their minister cower, as any other minister's wife would have done, under such an unqualified ultimatum, such a just and severe denunciation, from one of the richest and most influential members of the church.

But Mrs. Armstrong, her "head unbowed," her lips smiling, delivered, before she walked away, her parting shaft.

"And I'm glad of this chance to tell you, Mr. Wagenhorst, that I am very, very sorry for you—and for your poor family. Good-by."

CHAPTER X.

The Reverend Mr. Armstrong spent the afternoon of that day administering restoratives to his wife. Prostrate on his study couch, she received at his hands soothing applications of hot indignation against those who had been rude to her, tender sympathy for her nervous exhaustion after the strain, and gratifying amusement at her reproduction in manner and inflection of the Pennsylvania-Dutch attitude toward the suffrage question.

"And yet, Billy"—she gave him the benefit of some of her philosophical reflections upon her morning's experiences—"this environment has produced

a woman of innate dignity and refinement like Mrs. Wagenhorst—who, though married to Mr. Wagenhorst, *remains* fine—and a girl of intelligence and character and—yes, of natural *breeding*, like Liddy. How about it?"

"We manure the soil to make it bring forth its best," said Mr. Armstrong sententiously. "Wait until I write that down for a sermon."

He came back from his writing table to sit down again by the couch.

"I'm afraid," remarked Mrs. Armstrong, "that if we live here much longer, I shall find myself speaking of you and even to you as 'reverend.' By the way, I'm getting really interested in the case of that Wagenhorst youth at college and our Liddy. Of course he's in love with her. And the bit of human companionship she has had with us has made her bloom out so wondrously, he'll just be mad over her *now* when he sees her in the Christmas holidays. But afraid as he is of his father—as he has reason to be—what I fear is——"

She hesitated.

"Well, dear? What?"

"It seems like desecration to say it about a little white soul like Liddy—but, you see, the youth loves her and can't marry her. You know the danger in a situation like that with people of their class."

"Perhaps."

"Especially when a girl is so ignorant and so innocent and unsuspecting as Liddy is."

Mr. Armstrong thoughtfully considered it for a moment without answering.

"Don't you think there's danger?" his wife urged.

"Never having seen the young man, how can I judge?"

"But you've told me that the village standard of morality isn't very high. And Liddy being looked down upon as she is, the Wagenhorst young man

might have even less scruple in her case——"

"I'd trust Liddy."

"But she is so ignorant of life, Billy."

"We don't believe in such ignorance, you know, in these days. Perhaps you'd better, for the child's safety, Kitty, enlighten her?"

"I'd hate to. I might shock and offend her."

"Has she read 'Adam Bede'? I've always thought that novel the best sermon I know to put into the hands of a boy or a girl."

"Of course *she's* read it!"

"It wouldn't be possible for you to add much to what that novel has taught her, then."

Nevertheless, shortly before Elmer's return for the holidays—as to which Liddy was quite unable to conceal her excitement—Mrs. Armstrong's ever-active conscience drove her to try to "enlighten" and warn the young girl of the dangers and pitfalls of "love" in a village like Virginsburg.

"You've read 'Adam Bede,' Liddy, of course?"

"Yes, I read it through three times, already."

"And you quite understood it?"

"Why, yes, I think I understood it all."

"Mr. Armstrong thinks it's such an awful lesson on immorality."

"Yes, I guess," said Liddy gravely. "Liddy?"

"Well, Mrs. Armstrong?"

"Somehow, the case of that hero—Arthur, the rich gentleman, and Hetty, the poor adopted niece of the Peyser—reminds me of you and your friend Elmer."

"But—but Elmer isn't my beau—my lover, Mrs. Armstrong. And I—I'm not a bit like Hetty."

"Of course you're not a bit like Hetty," agreed Mrs. Armstrong, feeling she must proceed with care. "But

the situation—Elmer loving you, yet unable to marry you because of his father's opposition—— Liddy——"

"Well?"

"Are you capable of being tempted?"

"Tempted? To what? You don't mean—— Oh, you couldn't think I could be tempted like that Hetty! Why, Mrs. Armstrong!"

"I know you couldn't. I didn't mean tempted. I mean, Liddy, do you *know* the danger to a girl when a man loves her and yet can't marry her? If, for instance, you were an entirely different sort of a girl—do you see how *Elmer* might be tempted?"

"I see what you mean. But Elmer and I like each other so differently from the way Arthur and Hetty liked each other in that novel. Hetty was so beneath Arthur in everything, but Elmer and I like to exchange our thoughts. I like being with him as I like being with you, because of my friendship for you."

"Liddy," Mrs. Armstrong earnestly instructed her, "a close friendship between a man and a woman always means just one thing to the man. It means love."

"Elmer never said he was my lover, or that he wanted to marry me. He would have to give up too much." Liddy shook her head.

"And didn't you, either, ever think of marriage with him?"

"Well," said Liddy, flushing, "not until I watched you and Mr. Armstrong together, already. And then I did wonder, once or twice, how it would seem if Elmer and I lived together so near and intimate."

"How it would seem? Well, how did you think it would seem?"

Liddy laid her hand on her breast and drew a long, deep breath.

"It seemed too good for this life, Mrs. Armstrong. But," she added, her hand dropping limply to her lap, "I put such thoughts away from me, for I

know Elmer can't go against his father."

"And he knows, too, that he can't—yet he—yes, I'm quite sure that he *kisses* you when you are together. Now, doesn't he?"

"Yes," Liddy admitted. "I knew always that it wasn't *proper*—I've read enough to know that. But he seemed to want to—and no one had ever wanted to before in all my life—and I liked it, too, so well—"

She paused in some confusion, and Mrs. Armstrong laughed.

"My dear, I don't believe it's wise or safe for you two to kiss each other. *You* might be able to stand it, but I'm sure it's dreadfully hard on Elmer. Don't do it, Liddy. A man hasn't earned the right to kiss you until he's ready to stand out before the world as your protector. Elmer isn't ready to do that, so he's not yet entitled to such high privileges. Promise me—for your own good and happiness—that you won't let him do it any more—unless and until you are engaged to him."

"I'd better not *promise*, Mrs. Armstrong, for fear I couldn't always keep him from doing it. But this I will say: I'll try to stop him."

"Is he as stubborn as his father?"

"He would be, except that he is more educated, and that makes him sometimes see things a little reasonable."

"Oh, Liddy!" Mrs. Armstrong again laughed. "'Sometimes see things a little reasonable'! Education has done that for him, has it? More than it does for most men, I assure you. Well, I don't wonder Elmer enjoys your conversation. Has he a sense of humor?"

"A sense of humor?" repeated Liddy doubtfully. "I guess he hasn't much. Once I read to him from 'Mill on the Floss,' and instead of thinking that Maggie Tulliver's aunts were funny, he said it made him sad that there *were* such narrow-minded people in this world."

"I'm afraid he's a prig, Liddy. You're entirely too good to be thrown away on a prig, my dear."

"I don't believe I know right what a prig is."

"A conceited person who thinks himself virtuous and learned and superior."

"Elmer is not like that. And he is very smart."

In her heart, Liddy, who was astute, knew that Elmer had both a stronger personality and a keener mind than had the minister, even though the latter's culture did make her earlier friend appear by contrast very "common"; she had to admit it. But she felt sure his "commonness," unlike his father's, was not innate, but only superficial and due entirely to lack of advantages.

"Is Elmer more like his father or his mother?" Mrs. Armstrong asked.

"It seems to me he has refined feelings like his mother and a strong will like his father—only, to be sure, he has been raised very common, Mrs. Armstrong. Of course I didn't know that until I knew you and Mr. Armstrong. Even yet, you and he seem more like characters in books than real people. I have read about people like you, but you are the first I got acquainted with."

"I wonder whether Elmer will seem such a paragon to you, Liddy, when he comes home—after the glimpse you've had, through us, of another world of people?"

"But he, too, is seeing another world of people. I can see it in his letters."

"Excuse me, Liddy, if I say rude things, but I can't quite see that Farmer Wagenhorst's son as a creature fit to look at you."

"And every one else in Virginsburg would say I wasn't fit to associate with *him*," said Liddy pensively.

"The important point is that *he* thinks you are. Or does he dare to patronize you?"

"You mean—stoop down to me?"

"Yes. He doesn't take that tone to you, does he?"

"We're just two good, close friends, Mrs. Armstrong."

"Well, I hope I may meet your ladie when he comes home. I'll know more about him from five minutes of seeing him than from anything you can tell me. By the way, how shall you manage to meet him? It won't be so easy in winter as in summer, will it?"

"We've got it all planned out. Elmer is going to tell his father he has to go three times a week to the Allentown library to study—and he *will* study there, too. And there we'll meet and talk."

"You might be seen."

"But no one in Virginsburg ever goes to the library."

"Of course not. I didn't think of that. It's a safe place, too, in other respects. He can't kiss you in a public library."

"He says it is going to be hard on him, too, that we will have to come out from Allentown on different cars. It isn't that Elmer is a coward," she defended him. "It's only his prudence."

"I understand it better since I've seen his father. But, Liddy, I do earnestly advise you not to set your heart on Elmer. His father is rich, and I do not believe the Pennsylvania Dutchman lives who would forfeit an inheritance for the sake of a woman. Be warned in time and don't let yourself fall in love with him. I don't believe you are in love with him yet."

"I don't know if I am——"

"Whether I am, dear."

"——whether I am. Please tell me how it *seems* to be in love; then maybe I can know if—whether—I am or not."

"It never strikes two people alike, my dear. The way I found out I was in love was just imagining Mr. Armstrong married to some one else. It was so awful that I knew I'd got to

save myself from that—and the only way, of course, was to marry him myself."

Liddy, sitting in an armchair before the fire, did not speak, but gazed off into space with a far-away look—rapt and unseeing.

Mrs. Armstrong touched her hand to attract her attention.

"What's the matter, Liddy?"

"I'm trying it."

"Imagining Elmer married to another?"

"Yes."

"How does it work?"

"The same as it did with you. I couldn't stand it."

Mrs. Armstrong shook her head mournfully.

"I'm very sorry. Get over it. He's the only man you've ever known. You ought to sample a *few* before deciding on him."

Liddy did not lift her eyes as she slowly answered:

"I'll *try* to get over it. I don't want Elmer to suffer on my account. Perhaps"—she hesitated, her hand working nervously with a fold of her gown—"perhaps it would be a sacrifice for *any* man to marry me?"

"You mean, dear, because of your parents? Oh, well——"

"Please tell me at least that much," pleaded Liddy. "Would *any* man that knew what I *don't* know—be willing to marry me?"

"Oh, Liddy, you ask me a difficult question! But I really do believe men are less restrained from marriage by such considerations than women are; that a man in love is more reckless than a woman in love; that——"

"Reckless?" Liddy murmured, the color dying out of her face. "A man, to marry me, would have to be reckless?"

"Let me ask Mr. Armstrong for a *man's* view of it, Liddy."

Liddy shook her head hopelessly.

"If it is so dreadful," she said, her colorless lips quivering, "I'll never let any one sacrifice himself to marry me. When you love any one, you want to do everything to make them happy and——"

"Halt!" cried Mrs. Armstrong. "Don't go too far on that line. Applied to a man, there'd be no living with him. What's a woman's reward for sweetly doing everything she can to make a man happy? His bored contempt for her—that's what. No, my

dear, let *him* do a little of the work keeping *you* happy—and then he'll think you're a queen. Take my word for it."

To the Pennsylvania-Dutch point of view, this was extremely revolutionary. Liddy, gazing wide-eyed upon her monitor, who was perched birdlike on a big couch with her small feet tucked under her, considered it profoundly and solemnly.

She was, indeed, being educated, and upon theories rather more modern than those inculcated at Elmer's college.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE JUNE NUMBER.



FOR A LITTLE BOY WHO DIED

YOU leaped into my heart as leaps
 A burst of flame,
 As bounds a genius from the dark
 To sudden fame.
 You won me as the sickle moon
 Wins o'er the tide;
 You made yourself a part of me—
 And then you died.

It seems a dream that sodden earth
 Can cover you;
 That honeysuckle still can grow
 As once it grew;
 That you can be inanimate,
 Your last word said.
 It seems so futile I should live
 When you are dead.

It cannot be He needed you,
 So small, so fair.
 He could have left you here a while—
 He did not care!
 Forgive me, God, I meant it not—
 My tongue but lied!
 Forgive, I know not what I say—
 My heart has died.

LYON MEARSON.

The Glory Moth

By Marianne Gauss

Author of "Peter the Weak," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAYO BUNKER

The social hanger-on with no future save a rich marriage—
and the man who didn't propose—and yet it ends happily.

IT was in early summer that the Beach Club gave a ball to christen its new home on the point. Around the clubhouse were many roses and the huge velvet moths of midsummer nights—with a restless sea at the foot of the cliff. Inside, everything was beautiful and complete—frescoes, furnishings, the supper, and the orchestra. For it was a wealthy club.

Evangeline went that night.

Most people called her "Angie," because she was too small and too frivolous to suit her Christian name. She was dressed as a butterfly, in a costume she had made for herself of old velvet and cheap new silk. Her wings were brown-gold, to match her eyes. The brown velvet of the bodice was like her hair. And those mended places in the velvet—which nobody knew about—represented the pinching poverty concealed by her gayety and beauty.

She had, of course, no car at her command; so somebody had made Mrs. Hanley Wayne bring her out to the point in the Wayne motor. That was what gave Angie an unhappy evening, and made a difference in her whole life afterward.

Mrs. Wayne was a sharp, faded woman, who had once been almost as pretty as Angie. All the way out to the point, the girl had felt that something was wrong, and she had repeatedly thought: "She did not want to

bring me." There were times when Angie was heartsick and weary of the borrowed motors and all the other things she used, but had no way of paying for except by being agreeable. Mrs. Wayne, who had coin of another sort, did not trouble herself to be agreeable. Of course, people said that Angie's way to have a motor car of her own some day was to use the borrowed ones and pay in smiles. But they did not know, that evening, how her heart seethed in rebellion.

As she and Mrs. Wayne were standing together, before the music started, she was thinking of her mother, whose heart was so set on what she termed "Angie's success," who would suffer a bitter disappointment if her daughter should drop out of the fashionable set.

Then Eugene Chandler approached them.

Everybody observed. Everybody guessed that Angie and her mother *hoped*. For Chandler was one of those men who count—an influential fellow, rich, well bred, just getting into middle life, and not given to flirting with girls, so that his marked notice of Angie had caused comment. Long before, Mrs. Wayne had dubbed him "the old king trout," and she now referred to Angie as "the fishermaid," adding her opinion that Eugene was too wary for the hook.



The girl's face flamed,
and tears came to her
eyes.

On approaching the two ladies, he addressed himself ingratiatingly to Mrs. Wayne. With a look that appreciated the embroidery of tiny pearls on her blue velvet, "I wonder," he said, "if I dare mention somebody's wonderfully fetching new gown."

"I'm glad you like it, Eugene," Mrs. Wayne replied. "We were *so crowded* in the limousine, it got badly crumpled."

The girl's face flamed, and tears came to her eyes. No one saw them—no one should know. Angie flung back her head and laughed. She had the lightest

child laugh in the world—the kind of laugh that flutters like a butterfly. But she could feel a muscle twitch in her throat, and by that she knew what was likely to happen.

"Ah! You are a glory moth, I see!" Chandler touched the tip of her silken wing.

Angie had not known the name of the moth she was imitating in her costume. She wished to ask him about it, but was afraid she would break down if she tried to speak; so she laughed again. The first dance was his. But she dared

not stay any longer under those lights and those prying eyes.

"Don't let's dance," she said. "I'm so—warm!" There was an ominous break in her voice. "Let's go out on the porch and listen to the sea."

The moment she had spoken, she knew what Mrs. Wayne would think—that she was taking him away from the crowd to force him to commit himself, to make him say something he could not recall. Every one said she was trying to ensnare him. Would *he* think so, too?

She set her teeth. Among these people, nobody ever told any one else the truth; every one looked for the meaning underneath. And so she could never make him understand. She could not even recall her request that he come out of doors with her—for one must never be *queer*. So she took his arm, and went laughing out onto the deep veranda.

There, she leaned against the railing and hugged one of the thick, round pillars—because when she was tired and hurt, she liked to feel something in her arms. The light from inside fell on her small hands, her bright hair, her white forehead, with its bluish temples—and her wings. Chandler looked at her a moment, and then off to sea.

"What a wild wind to-night!" he remarked.

And she could not answer, for the wilder beating of her heart.

Of course, from the first, her friends had schemed to get her married to this man. And at first Angie had tried to please him as she tried to please all desirable men. She had danced and dressed for him, amused him in every way she could. But that had been before she cared.

She loved him now. If he had been a bank clerk, like little Bliffkins—who had courted her a long while—she would have loved him just the same. Now it was horrible to have been flung

in his way, to have had him see what he must have seen. And because she loved him so, she could not any longer play with Eugene Chandler or try to make him care.

Standing beside him that night, she glanced occasionally at his face—the never-to-be-forgotten face of the first man whose face had meant anything to her. It was rather grave just then; one might have called it grim. But how she loved his mouth! If he should grow hard with the years, it would be too thin some day. But when love curved it tenderly, it was beautiful. She knew; because when he had first met her, he had cared—or almost cared—for her. Did he ever feel so now? He had almost stopped coming to see her.

Suddenly he turned—and their eyes met.

When she loves a man, a woman understands quickly. So Angie knew that he was saying to himself:

"I've been a fool about this girl, but it's all over. I see I don't love her."

She wanted to cry out to him:

"Oh, Gene, love me or not, but don't believe what every one says! I haven't been scheming for your money. I know I've hung on in this set of people, taken their favors, when I hated them, danced and dressed when I should have been earning money somewhere to help pay the debts we owe. But I've done all these things because I loved you! I had to see you sometimes; I had to go where you go, since you didn't come to me any more. And, oh, I love you, I love you!"

But this would have been the truth—so of course she must not tell it.

They went back to the ballroom together. Somehow that evening passed—and at last Angie reached her home.

"It was so very good of you to take me to-night!" she said, smiling, to Mrs. Wayne. And to herself: "This is my last party, *while I live!*"

In her own room, she threw off the gold-and-brown butterfly dress and let it fall crumpled to the floor. Then she opened the windows wide, so that the salt air rushed in to cool her bare arms and throat; they burned so, with shame. Their very beauty made her hate herself. She was done draping those dimpled shoulders with chiffon, to show their rosy whiteness; done spending her soul on the problem how to dispense with gloves—since nobody else had such round arms as hers.

When she began to feel chilly, she drew the end of a curtain around her, where she sat on the floor. She realized now that she had never belonged to this world of the Beach Club. She hated it. As for the man—it was not strange he had come to see that he could not love her. Why, he had been pleased, at first, by that girl she had pretended to be—not by Evangeline Hurst.

She laid her face against her bed and sobbed.

If her father had lived, he would have understood, for he had never belonged, either—though his wife would drag him about to parties. But Angie's mother was very much surprised and not a little distressed, next day, when the girl declared that she would go no more to such places as the Beach Club.

"I ought," insisted Angie, "to be earning something, instead of running up bills. And I'm going to ask some of daddy's old friends for a job."

The poor lady wept.

But Angie was like her father; when fully determined on a course of action, she could not be diverted from it. She went at once in search of work. After a day or so, she found it in the office of old Judge Somebody, who had loved her father. And it did seem an irony—to Mrs. Hurst—that with such a neck for evening dress, Angie was to spend the rest of her life in shirt waists.

The new job was on the top floor of

the Baer Building. And certainly that evening at the club had changed Angie's whole life. For if Mrs. Wayne had not been disagreeable, probably the girl's eyes would not have been opened to things—particularly to what Chandler must think of her; so she would not have gone to work. Then she would not have been in the Baer Building the day of the storm. And it was during the storm that she found and loved the real man, who was to be the world to her.

The storm did not occur for some weeks after she went to work. During that time, she had not seen Chandler; for, immediately after the ball, he had gone to Honolulu on business. But on the morning when the great gale began, she chanced to see him on a trolley car. He had returned to town. The old wound ached and smarted. He had not called to say good-by before going to Honolulu; he had not sent a line in token of their friendship. And yet—had she no pride at all?—she sat in the street car hoping with all her heart that he would come and sit beside her.

But he sat absorbed in a paper. As she was leaving the car, he saw her—started—lifted his hat. That was all.

Was it her heart or her pride that was hurt? She hurried to the top floor of the Baer Building and stood a while by the window.

"I hate him!" she said between her teeth.

For he had been very unjust to her! Only—so inconsistent was she—in her secret heart she would rather have had him think that she had wanted his money than that she had loved him when he did not want her.

Already the wind that had been blowing two days had increased ominously. Nobody guessed that before night the sea would break in at the wharfs and sweep one end of the city away. Angie looked down at a gray fog of blow-



As she was leaving the car, he saw her—started—lifted his hat.

ing sand in the street. She saw working people on the sidewalk, five stories below, and it seemed to her that they all came downtown by twos—sisters or chums or men and their wives.

"But I am all alone," she thought. "Nobody cares about me."

A girl will often get that idea when the truth is merely that one man does not care. It comes from a foolish no-

tion that he is the only man in the world.

All day the storm increased. After noon, there was such a roar of wind and water, it almost seemed as if the Baer Building had slipped out to sea. And Angie sat listening to the gale. For the old judge had not returned after the noon hour, and she had no work to do. Nothing could be seen from the



window but ocean sand and dark flying objects that were hurled across the street. A dentist's girl ran in from across the hall.

"The new clubhouse of the Beach Club is gone!" she shouted, above the wild noise of the storm. "And the sea is all over the point, they say—higher than it's been for forty years!"

Angie grew pale and sprang to her feet. But instead of following the dentist's girl into the hall, she stood at a window looking into the fog of sand toward the point, where the Beach Club had stood. That night—with the roses, the big moths, and the restless sea at the foot of the cliff—seemed very long ago. And who was that girl who had worn a brown-and-gold dress like a glory moth? Not Evangeline Hurst, surely!

After a time, it began to rain heavily. As it grew dark, in the late afternoon, something white was hurled against the window and crashed through. It was a dead sea gull.

The dentist's girl looked in again to say:

"You'd better hurry and start home, Miss Hurst. There's a perfect river in the street. A lot of us are going to wade out as far as Van Buren, and get a trolley!"

"I was waiting," Angie replied, "for the rain to stop."

And the girl shouted back from the staircase:

"Don't! The men say this building isn't safe."

Until then, such an idea had not occurred to Angie. She put on her rubbers, raincoat, and veil, to follow the other girl; it seemed to take a long while. Then she went to the elevator, found no one in charge, and so took the stairway. When she finally reached the ground floor, the building was apparently empty, and she could see the men and women who had just left it

wading up the street toward Van Buren Place.

She paused, for the water in the street looked as if it would reach her knees. Tentatively, like a kitten, she put out one foot—

There came a roar of the storm, and a gust that seemed to hurl the whole sea against the Baer Building. She ran from it, back into the hall.

It was growing dark now. The light plant had been destroyed; the telephone was cut off; the Baer Building stood deaf and blind, shuddering at every fresh gust of wind. The water rose into the hall; so Angie went halfway up the first flight of stairs.

After a little, on the seething torrent that came down the street, appeared things from the wrecked homes in the residence district south of the Baer Building—a kitchen chair, with a dish towel twisted into its back; a piece of a piano; a baby's little bed. All these things Angie distinguished in the rapidly fading light. At last, something else drew near.

It paused at the entrance door and waited there a moment, with arms outstretched. It seemed to hesitate whether or not to enter. Angie saw its white face and wet hair. Presently it left the doorway and floated on with the waves. She put her face down on her knees and kept it that way a long while.

Now and then a boat would go by on the farther side of the street, and she would shout, but the storm made such a noise she was not heard. At last a boat came, of which she was afraid because it skulked by without a light. Looters were abroad in the flooded town.

Angie withdrew to the second floor—in terror. In the pitchy blackness—with the floor lurching under her at every fresh gust—some hours passed. There was a clock somewhere, and she heard it strike nine. Then a shower

of plastering fell; and after that the clock ceased its throbbing tick behind the partition against which she crouched in the dark.

It must have been eleven o'clock when there was a pause between gusts; a moment of intense stillness, as if the storm had ceased. In that moment, Angie thought she heard, on the staircase below her—a step.

She had enough presence of mind not to cry out, but crawled backward into the second-floor hall, away from the staircase. There she waited. The wind rose again. She did not hear the footstep again, and began to think it might have been her fancy.

Then, inside the building, she heard a shrill whistle—followed by a shout. It was such a signal as a man might give to a pal, waiting outside with a boat. She held her breath.

A wave of desolation swept her heart. She felt, as never before, how all alone she was in the world since her father's death, with no man's arm for her defense, no man's love to avenge her if harm came to her.

The intruder was mounting the stairs.

On the top one, near where she had sat a few moments before, he struck a match. As he stooped to shelter it from the wind, she saw him indistinctly—a coatless and ragged figure, big-boned, thick in the shoulders. Then the tiny flame leaped at his face—so dirty that his teeth showed very white.

She was numb with fear; if she had wanted to move, she could not have done so.

The intruder went by her so close that she could have touched him, and a moment later she heard him shout again, above the wind. She tried to think.

Was she indeed alone in the building, as she had thought? Might there not be some one on whom to call, if she but knew where to find him? She

rose to her feet and stood against the wall. Not far away, she knew, was the door into an office. If she could feel along the wall and find that—

The wind had made such a noise that she had not heard him, but he was coming back, down the hall. He stood within three feet of her. He stopped. And now the wind lulled; she could hear him breathing—quickly, as if he were very tired.

She saw that he had paused to strike another match. And he had a lantern, which he must have been trying, futilely, to light. She gathered her breath—for one cry. Then, if there was any one to hear—

His match flared up and showed her his face. It was damp with sweat, covered over with grime. One sleeve had been torn from the shoulder, the other hung in ribbons; for he had been toiling all that afternoon, with other men of the city, trying to rescue a few of the unfortunates who had been trapped in the houses between Third Avenue and Chandler Street.

"Eugene!" she cried out.

She had never called him "Eugene" before; not for half a world, in the old, proud days, would she have had him know she thought of him that way always!

"Vangie!"

"And to think it was you—you! Why, I thought—I was afraid when I heard you come in!"

"Thank God I found you! But we've got to hurry. This place may go any minute."

They gained the top of the staircase. Suddenly the wildest wave of that whole storm broke upon the Baer Building. The front end gave way. Wind and salt mist rushed in.

Chandler put both arms around the girl. And for a little while they were perfectly quiet, waiting for what might happen. Another wall of the building



They were taken out to the Heights—where trolleys were running—by
a roundabout way.

crashed in, and bricks fell all around; but they were unhurt. Then they felt the staircase going down, carrying them toward the flood below them. It hung suspended above the water.

"This is pretty bad," said the man. And then—it was no time for lying, or even holding back the truth—"Angie, I want you to know—I love you."

She did not answer in words, but turned and clung to him. So they waited for the staircase to fall.

But minutes passed, and it remained as it was, supported by timbers of the wrecked building. There was no gleam of light anywhere, and the rain poured in on them.

"If you love me—why did you go away, Eugene?"

"Because I didn't want to love you. I wanted to be—free." Perhaps, but for that wild wind and the black water below, even he—who hated sham—would have lied. His hand closed around hers. "I know I was a fool!"

"No, you were not a fool. I was not myself, you know. I was trying to be like—Mrs. Wayne and the people at the Beach Club."

"You couldn't be!" he cried triumphantly. "It was only that you were always at their parties, and there was no other way for me to see you. So I began to go to those places, too. Of course, I never belonged, but I pre-

tended to like things. I loathe pretending. It makes me sick. And, by and by, it made me angry with you. So I thought I'd cut it all and go away."

She could hear his heart, near her cheek, beating hard from the violent toil of the day and from the excitement that had thrown him off his guard. It might have taken years—but for the storm—to find the real man she loved.

"I wasn't going to tell you all this," he confessed.

The staircase swayed back and forth, rocked by the waves below. But it did not fall. What remained of the Baer Building remained all night. The rain ceased; the wind went down; dawn came. Then the sun rose over the ruins of the business blocks, and, a little later, came men with boats.

Angie and her lover were taken out to the Heights—where trolleys were running—by a roundabout way that led past the point where the Beach Club had built their house a few months before. Nothing remained of the clubhouse except a huge stone chimney and a few pieces of wood tossing on the waves that beat around the point. Even the roses were gone. But, as the boat went by the place, something settled there to rest. It stood at the prow, slowly opening and closing its wings—a brown-velvet moth, flecked with gold.



AN INCONSIDERATE STREET CAR

WOMEN are not the only passengers who sometimes step off a moving street car backward, and later blame the company for their bruises.

One morning an old colored preacher limped into the office of a Carthage claim attorney.

"Is dis dem lawyers what sues people?" he asked.

"Yes," said Attorney B—. "We bring suits when there is cause. What is the matter?"

"I wants to sue dis heah street-cyar company. I's gettin' off, and they done pulled that cyar right out from under me."



The Hotel Baby

By Anne Spottswood Young

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

Haven't you known this particular sort of child? Laughed at, flattered, teased, is it any wonder that she becomes spoiled and pert? There's a grown-up girl here whom you will like.

INTO the ornate elevator of the Palace Hotel stepped a lithe, willowy girl, a delightful foil to the very lovely elderly lady who leaned upon her arm. Facing them, as they entered, was the typical couple whose lives are entirely absorbed in the city and all it holds for self-indulgence. The man was heavy-eyed, bulldog-jawed; his companion was gayly overdressed, elab-

orately coiffured, much rouged and powdered. At her every restless movement, a heavy vanity case clinked against a jeweled mesh bag, through which gleamed—or rather screamed—a roll of yellow-backed bills and several shining coins of the same precious metal as the purse itself.

Each individual in the car—even Sammy Buttons, the boy operator—

added effectively to the cosmopolitan harmony of the group. Melody and discord were here not unpleasantly mingled. The necessary element of force and strength was to be found in the young man who stood near the bronze door, and a true minor note was struck by the little girl who occupied the only chair that the elevator afforded. Her alabaster skin bore no hint of youthful roses, while her lips, startlingly red in contrast to her extreme pallor, drooped fretfully. Even the natural loveliness of her dark eyes and sweeping lashes was marred by the deep shadows that lay beneath them. One slim leg was curled up under her, the other swung easily to and fro with the unconscious, sprawly grace of childhood. Upon this youngest passenger the attention of all was suddenly centered by an unexpected reproof from the woman of the noisy jewelry.

"Little girl," said she briskly, "you ought to get up and give the old lady your chair."

"I got it first," came the answer, with glib pertness, accompanied by a cool, appraising stare.

Scarcely was the last word uttered when the man near the car door hastened forward, with an air of parental authority. He lifted his small daughter to her slippered feet and bowed to the silver-haired lady, who accepted the chair graciously, her cheeks flushed at the tactless, if kindly, interference of the younger woman in her behalf.

The incident was depressing. The dangling golden ornaments clinked loudly as their dismayed owner uttered an embarrassed "Pardon me!" and all looked away except the willowy girl, who continued to gaze at the downcast face of the little culprit, as if trying to capture some fleeting memory.

Whatever that memory was, it evidently ceased to baffle her when she caught a quick glance from the father that was almost boyish in its frank ap-

peal. The involuntary smile Eleanor Maynard gave in answer was both humanly sweet and sweetly human. Then convention dropped its thick curtain between them, and a well-bred silence ensued, broken only by an irritating snicker from the amused and elated Sammy Buttons.

That teasing laugh, quickly covered though it was by a decorous cough, had the desired effect upon the little girl. Had he shouted, "Goody, goody!" in triumph at her disgrace, the result would have been the same. She did not deign to look at the impertinent employee, but she tried desperately to save the last shreds of her childish dignity by jerking away from the restraining hand upon her shoulder and crying, in shrill, nervous wrath:

"You let me be, father, *will* you?"

He let her be, white now with annoyance and mortification, and it was with relief that the group separated at the next floor, leaving the elevator boy grinning over the prospect of rehashing this dish of gossip to the night clerk.

Sammy, however, was on a late watch, and it was not until the clock over the hotel desk was striking one in the morning that he slipped behind the counter where the immaculate Mr. Carter was engaged in languid toil. Here, leaning in nonchalant ease against the mail boxes, Sammy, with clever touches of mimicry, told of "the great calling down of the hotel baby," and was much flattered by his superior's amusement.

"Just the same, Buttons," warned Mr. Carter, turning a page of the register with a very long, highly polished nail, "don't forget that a goodly number of quarters come your way from the little terror's fond relatives."

"I fergit it, Mister Carter? Not on your life, bullieve me! Whatever intrusts Mrs. Tredennis intrusts Sammy. Whatever appeals to the pop of the gilded kid appeals also to——" An insistent buzzing of the desk telephone

interrupted. "I'll answer it," volunteered the boy. "Yep," he drawled. "*Mister Carter is speaking!*" The clerk yawned, and smiled tolerantly, thinking the pretty telephone girl had called up, as usual, to break the tedium of her watch. "A doctor?" gibed Buttons. "The gilded kid is sick? Great news, that! You're the pretty new nurse, ain't you? You peacherino, have a heart! Let 'er die, and you get a new job that's worthy of— Oh, *suffering cats!*"

Sammy's banter ceased with such alarming suddenness that the clerk was alert on the instant. With marvelous presence of mind, he snatched the receiver with one hand and grasped the boy's thick head of hair with the other. Then suavely his quiet voice rang over the wire:

"Oh, yes, Miss Maynard? I was away from the desk just a moment!" A savage wrench of Sammy's locks emphasized his words. "Mr. Tredennis is out. He left word he would be detained quite late. Mrs. Tredennis is at the opera, with friends, and they have not returned. The house physician? I'm so sorry! He was called away an hour ago. One of our employees was— Yes? Yes! The pass-keys? Certainly. The nurse is not there? I'll find a maid for you, and I'll telephone at once for a doctor."

Mr. Carter hung up the receiver, only to take it off the hook again, ignoring, with superb dignity, his clutch upon Sammy.

"Lemme go!" whined that unfortunate youth. "I kin say I was off duty at one o'clock, if you jest lemme go. I mighter known that wasn't the kid's nurse, 'cause I seen her skip off with a plumber from the Altamont to go to the Gas Man's Annual."

"What's the trouble here?" came in cool, amused tones from the other side of the counter.

The grip upon Sammy's curly pate loosened, and he bolted, with a fright-

ened "Mr. Tredennis!" The clerk's poise did not desert him, nor did he waste time in explanations regarding Buttons.

"Your little daughter is ill, Mr. Tredennis," said he, with just the proper note of concern. "Mrs. Tredennis has not returned from the opera, and the nurse has evidently run off for the evening. Miss Maynard, one of our guests, is with the child now, and she has telephoned down for a doctor. I'm trying to get one, but haven't—"

"Get Doctor Davis," interrupted Mr. Tredennis. "Tell him who wants him. Ask him to bring a trained nurse. Then phone me."

Before the clerk, quick as he was, could call the number hastily scribbled on a piece of paper, Mr. Tredennis had reached the nearest elevator, where a boy of a different type from the illustrious Sammy was in waiting.

"I'm glad you've come, sir," he volunteered, as the car shot upward. "You'll have to go through Miss Maynard's room and climb through the window onto the fire escape. The nurse must have taken the door key with her, and Mrs. Tredennis never leaves hers in the office."

Mr. Tredennis nodded, and, when the elevator stopped, the two ran down the corridor and into Eleanor Maynard's room, the boy waiting till his companion had disappeared through the window before returning to his car. As the man sprang through the casement of the adjoining apartment, he was greeted by a wail of relief from the girl he had seen early in the evening.

"Hurry!" she implored, bending over a little form in a heap of tumbled sheets and blankets.

Hastening to her side, he thought at first that another person was in the room, for a dark figure loomed up on one side of the bed, a seated figure, horribly still and quiet. The next moment he saw it was a cleverly made dummy,



"Not only ill! She's dying!" said he, the haggard grayness of his countenance belying the trained calmness of his tone.

constructed of pillows and draped with a long cloak and veil. The girl turned a blanched face to his.

"Oh, Mr. Tredennis, the doctor! Will he never come? The little girl—she is very ill."

For answer, the father pulled away the covers and looked closely at the rolling eyes.

"Not only ill! She's dying!" said he, straightening up again, the haggard grayness of his countenance belying the trained calmness of his tone.

"No, no!" protested Eleanor, but her voice trembled. "She's had a severe spasm, and I'm afraid she's going into another one."

"Do you know what to do?"

"Yes—a hot bath— The water is ready, but I can't lift her—she struggles so!"

"Tell me what to do."

He slipped his strong arms under the

little sufferer. The restless hands had torn open the daintily embroidered white silk pajamas, and the narrow chest thus exposed looked pitifully thin. The child was beginning to stiffen and jerk once more.

"Quick! Oh, quick!" urged Eleanor. "Carry her into the bathroom. Put her in the tub just as she is." She followed him swiftly, impatiently flinging back over her shoulders her two long, heavy braids. When they reached the tub, she knelt beside it and, thrusting up one sleeve of her bath robe, tested the temperature with her round white elbow. "It's just right. Put her in. It won't burn her. Give her to me. Oh, my baby girl! Dreadful! There, I have her. Take off your coat—you can work better."

He obeyed her silently, handing her what she needed, turning on hot or cold water according to direction, helping

her hold the child. The second spasm was narrowly averted. The rolling eyes grew steadier; the tense little mouth, bleeding where the teeth had caught the lower lip, relaxed; the clenched hands, where no dimples lurked, unfolded. As the anxious watchers saw her grow better, Eleanor explained, in broken phrases:

"I heard her cry. She wakened me. Then she gave shriek after shriek, and I knew she must be alone. I ran out into the hall, but her door was locked. So was the next door. The elevator boy saw me and tried to help, but he couldn't leave his car. He reminded me of the fire escape. When I crawled through the window, she was in a state of frozen horror, her eyes fixed glassily on that figure."

"What is that thing?" demanded Mr. Tredennis hoarsely.

"I knew at once. It's a dummy, dressed up to make the child think the nurse was still with her if she awoke. She did awake, ill, or from a bad dream. The figure didn't move or speak, and you can imagine the rest. She clung to me for a second, then went into a spasm. I turned on the water and telephoned the night clerk, but there was something wrong downstairs, and it seemed so *long* before I could make any one understand! And then, at last, you came!"

Mr. Tredennis did not answer. Gratitude, poignant anxiety, white anger, struggled for mastery, but he merely shifted the little girl's weight to one arm and gently lifted Eleanor's soaked braids out of the water as she rose to her feet.

"Hold her under while I find some dry clothes," she directed, and disappeared into the next room, to return in a few moments with a small flannel gown in her hands.

Completely absorbed in her self-imposed task, she might have been a trained nurse, with no thought except

for her patient, as she swept bath towels from the rack and nodded in readiness. Taking his dripping and faintly complaining little daughter from the steaming tub, Mr. Tredennis followed Eleanor, who caught up a blanket from the bed, seated herself in a rocker near the radiator, and held out her arms.

"Now, give her to me," she said, "and hadn't you better answer the telephone? How long has it been ringing?"

Detained at the instrument though he was, giving orders and receiving information, it was the dummy that held him absorbed as he recrossed the room. He stood long and looked at the figure, finally jerking it up like some hateful living thing and flinging it into a far corner, to lie in a ludicrously forlorn and spineless heap against the wall. When he stood beside the rocker once more, the child was warmly wrapped up, and quiet, save for the nervous working of one hand, which had crept from the shelter of the blanket. Eleanor looked up inquiringly, and he answered her unspoken questions.

"Doctor Davis had just come from a late call, and started here at once in his machine. There has evidently been some carelessness about the pass-keys. They're not in their proper place, but they—and also a maid—are still coming," he added grimly. "I dare not think what might have happened if you——"

The sentence remained unfinished, for at the sound of his voice, low though it was, the patient opened her eyes drowsily, at first troubled, then content as she recognized him.

"Father!"

"Yes, darling?" He had to bend his head low to hear. "What is it, Hope?"

The words came slowly, with the infinite pathos of a sick child:

"Father—I'm awful sorry—I was bad!"

He knelt beside her and drew the

little fingers, with quick impulsiveness, to his lips.

"It's all right, sweetheart, all right now. Go to sleep." And as she smiled and dozed off again, he added: "My dear little girl, I am afraid it is father and a lot of other folks who have been 'bad,' and not you."

Eleanor answered him gently:

"May I say something?"

"Yes."

"You won't like it."

"Say it, nevertheless," he replied, rising and standing with one hand on the back of her chair, and somehow his tone gave her the peculiar kind of courage she just then needed.

"Four years ago I came to this hotel for a few weeks. This little girl was then not more than two, the prettiest baby I ever saw, so very sweet that I never forgot her. On this visit——"

"Go on! I'm listening."

"On this visit," continued Eleanor, feeling for her words, "the child was still living here. I recognized you both in the elevator this evening, but the little girl was so changed, not only by the years, but by hotel life that—that at first——"

She paused again. Only an intense stillness greeted her hesitation now, and, gathering her courage together, she plunged on:

"Please forgive me if I hurt you unjustly, or judge you wrongly. This darling little girl, made to be guarded and cherished, is the talk of the hotel. Her name is on every lip. She is the 'gilded kid' to the employees, the 'little terror' at the desk, the 'hotel baby' to the guests. Egged on by the thoughtless, laughed at, flattered, teased, her every pert word, poor child, furnishes gossip for the lobby and subject matter for coarse wit among the servants."

Hope stirred sleepily, and Eleanor's arms tightened soothingly about her.

"I fear—in fact, I know—I am doing wrong to say this," she stumbled

on, "but don't answer me yet. Wait till you understand why I speak. My parents died when I was very young, leaving me wealth and nothing else. I was called fortunate, as your daughter is, but I was a neglected little soul, nevertheless. I won't linger over myself, except to say that I knew, when I heard this little girl scream, that she was alone in the dark, a *child's* dark, peopled with unnamed horrors. I remembered so well, and, *remembering*, I would have braved anything to come to her. Please explain this as best you can to her beautiful mother.

"No—wait!" as Mr. Tredennis tried to speak. "You saw the lady with me to-night? She's not my mother. She's only a distant relative, but closer to me than any one knows. She it was who came to me and saved me at last. Her patience and her love surrounded me, and to her I owe everything. That's why my heart goes out with a strange understanding to this child whose tender body is being broken down by wrong food and late hours, whose bright mind is being filled with false ideals and ideas.

"I saw the working of her hands to-night, the involuntary jerking away from you, the intense nervousness which she couldn't help—naughtiness, pure and simple, to every one but my foster mother and me. You were right just now. The 'badness' should be blamed on others." Her voice lowered at a murmur from her little charge. "You saw that other woman in the car? I'm not gossiping; I must speak of her. You noted her natural kindness, but her haggard eyes, her utter weariness of this world? You don't want Hope to grow up to be—like that?"

"God forbid!"

"God does forbid!"

In the moment's silence that followed, Eleanor's lips rested on Hope's soft hair. Two big tears fell upon the blanket and glittered there unheeded, ex-



"Father—I'm awful sorry—I was bad!"

cept by Mr. Tredennis, whose eyes rested on them when he spoke. He, too, chose his words with care.

"My business entails the constant overseeing of mines," said he. "I'm kept away for months at a time. Often my work calls me to the other side of the world, unavoidably, for my own interests are so involved with those of others that I dare not neglect them. Just now, I happen to have a respite, owing to the widespread disturbance of the war, and I did not realize how things were going with my daughter till this visit. I am—quite as dismayed as you can possibly be. Next week I take her away from here to our new country home, Hillcrest, and—"

"Hillcrest! Next to Terrace Manor?"

"Yes. Do you know the place?"

"Terrace Manor is my home," said Eleanor faintly. "I should never have had the courage to speak, had I known

we were to be neighbors. I was so sure we would never meet again." There came to her with sudden vividness a mental picture of the beautiful, pleasure-loving Mrs. Tredennis, and she added, with naïve encouragement: "It can be made very gay with motors, you know, and people from town. Hope will love it. So will you. And Hope's mother will love it in time, I'm sure."

"Hope's mother is dead," said Mr. Tredennis.

Startled and white, the girl sat still for a long half minute.

"But—Mrs. Tredennis?" she faltered at last.

"Mrs. Tredennis is my brother's wife. They took the baby when her mother died, and they have done their best, according to their light, for they are devotedly fond of her."

Eleanor rose shakily to her feet, and Mr. Tredennis, taking Hope from her,



On the threshold stood the lovely Mrs. Tredennis, resplendent in jewels and floating chiffons, but pale with very real alarm.

gazed at her in solicitude. She was no longer a self-reliant, perfectly poised girl, ready to do and to dare for what she felt was right—competent, helpful, resourceful. Reaction had her in a cruel, relentless grip. The patient was sweetly asleep, and certainly out of immediate danger, and her unconventional act, now that she was no longer imperatively needed, was looming up grotesquely before her, each detail exaggerated out of all proportion to its true value. In one instant, she was unstrung, very tired and miserable, a pathetic, drooping figure in a damp bath robe, over which the heavy braids still dripped dishearteningly.

The situation that she had met and managed with superb skill collapsed in

her grasp, but slipped very naturally into the man's control. It was singular that the same boyish, appealing look that he had given her in the elevator should now make the tears well over and roll down her cheeks. He felt in his pocket and proffered his handkerchief practically, and the girl's sense of humor sprang to her rescue. From her lips came a ripple of April laughter like that of a child who has been sustained and comforted ere a threatened storm could break.

There was a sound of hurrying footsteps along the corridor, a woman's sweet tones, high pitched in excitement, soothing answers in a man's voice. Eleanor thrust the handkerchief back to its owner.

"Look at me!" Mr. Tredennis spoke low and quickly. "I know—I understand. You will be concerned to-morrow. You're sorely troubled already. You'll be afraid you did something wrong, but, oh, my dear girl——"

In vain he hastened his words. A key turned in the lock, and the door swung open. On the threshold stood the lovely Mrs. Tredennis, resplendent in jewels and floating chiffons, but pale with very real alarm, her opera cloak dragging to the floor. On one side of her was the physician, on the other a trained nurse, to whose expert ministrations the patient was surrendered. In the background stood enough maids and men to care for the entire floor. Even the long-delayed pass-keys jangled capably from the belt of the house-keeper. Mr. Carter had been busy.

Amid the temporary confusion, the

murmurs of the curious employees, the doctor's calm orders, the nurse's subdued responses, and the tearful effusion of Mrs. Tredennis, Eleanor's one thought was to escape. She tried to reach the hall unnoticed, but found Mr. Tredennis at her side, and wavered uncertainly at his touch upon her arm.

For one brief, vibrant moment, surrounded though they were, they seemed to be alone. Slowly she raised her face to meet his keen gray eyes. Quietly he spoke to her from out a breathless silence. She turned and fled, but even in the shelter of her room, leaning against the door, slender white fingers pressed to her cheeks, she could not banish those last strangely prophetic, vaguely disturbing, altogether comforting words:

"I have one vision, one memory, only—your arms around Hope!"

THE LAST FAREWELL

HOW could you know, dear heart, that when my head
Was bowed beneath your hand, which lightly fell
Upon my hair, that I was comforted?
That I had said farewell?

How could you know, dear heart? I did not speak;
I dared not speak the longing that I knew,
But, rising, touched the sweet curve of your cheek,
Bidding farewell to you.

And yet you knew, dear heart, and all this day
You called to me, and, ah, too well I heard
The voice of your lone spirit far away,
Echoing one sad word.

So I returned, dear heart, that you might know
The silken strand by Fate so firmly spun
May never break. At last, at last I go
Far from you and the sun.

Farewell, because I love you. Though bereft
Forever of those lips that I have known,
Forever am I with you, for I left
My heart within your own.

HENRY HERBERT KNIBBS.



The Headliner

By

LEIGH GORDON GILTNER

Author of "The Circle,"

"Burned Bridges," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY
J. PAUL BURNHAM

IT used to be the pet plaint of the managers, before the films drew their fire, that the varieties, with the seductive "jingle of the guinea," lured from the legitimate its brightest luminaries.

Stetson, who produced everything from Maeterlinck to musical comedy, reversed the process. There was a legend that he had found his most popular star in the chorus of a spectacular revue; that he had picked up another in a cheap cabaret; and that he constantly recruited his forces from the two-a-day. Be that as it might, he made a point of dropping in frequently at each of the local vaudeville houses. He was ever alert for a "find."

Stetson knew little enough of music as a fine art; but he did know what his public liked, and his capable musical staff saw that it got what it wanted. He had no "uplift" theories whatever, and the newspaper interviews and signed magazine articles in which he discoursed fluently of the technique, trend, and traditions, of the drama were all press-agent stuff, which he never even read.

Yet this shrewd, self-made dealer in human wares had a positive *flair* for genius in any form, and an almost uncanny accuracy in appraising such assets as voice, personality, and even that impalpable quality styled charm.

He had the ablest of lieutenants; his underlings were selected for their efficiency; their intelligent assistance enabled him to invest in the best talent purchasable. Yet he was not the sort to rest upon his laurels; he preferred to anticipate the popular fancy. He knew—none better!—the fickleness of the public and how quickly it becomes "fed up" on a particular style of play or personality, and he was constantly on the lookout for novel types and new talent.

Some one had tipped him off that the bill-topper at Kester's was distinctly worth his while. Stetson rarely made the mistake of a skeptical attitude where his own interests might be involved. He knew from experience that genius flourishes often in the least likely settings, and he never disdained a hint that might lead to the addition of a new star to his galaxy. To be sure, he was

sometimes disappointed; often the trails he pursued led into empty dusks; occasionally he "hitched his wagon to a star" whose drawing powers proved negligible; but quite as often he discovered and developed an exceptional voice, a magnetic personality, or a notable dramatic gift. He had even, so tradition ran, successfully exploited an ex-circus clown.

He hated vaudeville in itself, and he had no mind to sit through the turns of trained chimpanzees, juggling comedians, and "piquant pianoquillists," so he accurately timed his entrance with that of "Miss Iris Vaughn, in arias from the operas."

Stetson's mental processes were rapid, and he decided on sight:

"She's a winner, even if she's a deaf-mute!"

The girl was indeed breath-takingly beautiful. Stetson's trained eye penetrated the make-up and appraised her as the most delectable morsel offered a jaded public appetite in many moons—and beauty was no novelty to Stetson. He had on his pay roll scores of girls whose faces were their sole fortunes, and who were paid merely to stand about in Botticelli attitudes and look lovely. He trafficked in feminine charms for stage display as frankly as he bought scores or play scripts—and quite as impersonally.

Yet he could not recall among his forces a face and figure more perfect than those of this young vaudeville star. She was slender, yet not angular; graceful, despite certain exaggerated stage mannerisms in gesture and carriage. Her contours were faultless, her eyes superb. Stetson leaned back in his seat and prepared for disillusionment when she began to sing.

"Probably has a voice like a peacock," he told himself, "but one can't blame Vardon for being deaf to the fact."

Iris Vaughn's first liquid note fell

upon the silence. Stetson sat up. He recognized on the instant a voice of such rare quality, such fluency, such tonal beauty and opulence, that he was positively staggered. He did not run to epithet and he had no adjectives adequate to express it. Unmusical as he was, he was not aware that she was essaying the big aria from "Tosca," but he did realize that she was attempting something rather ambitious, and, as he mentally phrased it, "getting it over with a vaudeville audience!"

It was really a rather wonderful organ. High, flexible soprano that it was, it had the creamy quality of the contralto; it was admirably trained and controlled, marvelously fluent and flexible, liquid, velvety, dazzlingly brilliant in its *coloratura*, yet without that thinness of the upper register which so often characterizes the lyric voice.

In response to surprisingly vociferous applause, considering the character of her selection, she sang the "Batti, Batti," with a ripple like laughter running through her voice. Next she amazingly attempted and admirably executed the mad scene from "Lucia," which displayed the wonderful flute quality of her tones to perfection. A singular offering for a mixed audience; but, Stetson noted, she "got it across." Then, with exquisite simplicity, she sang in English "Robin Adair." As always, the house responded to the appeal of the dearly familiar. It was a riot.

Stetson sought the manager.

"Want to meet your warbler, Stoke-ly," he announced briefly.

"'Nother find? All right. She'll be off directly."

Stetson failed to note the queer quality of Stoke-ly's grin.

They went back. Miss Vaughn had just reached the wings when Stoke-ly intercepted her.

"Wait a minute. Some one to see you, Miss Vaughn." The girl paused and turned. "Meet Mr. Stetson, who's

staged more shows and made more stars than any man alive." Then, to the question in her eyes: "Likes your voice—may want to give you a try-out."

It struck Stetson that the singer looked rather more frightened than flattered. At close range, she was even more beautiful than he had appraised her, despite the disfiguring make-up.

"Can you call at the Salvini Theater to-morrow at eleven, Miss Vaughn?" he said crisply. "That is, if you're open to engagement. I'd like you to run over——"

"I don't read music at sight," she faltered. "My sister"—Stetson bowed vaguely in the general direction of a shadowy figure in the background—"my sister teaches me my songs by rote."

"I don't know that that matters," Stetson mused. "If you'll give me your address, I'll send you the score of 'The Moon Maid,' with the numbers I want to hear marked. Think you can get up on, say, three by Wednesday at ten?"

"I—I think so——" the girl hesitated.

"All right. May have something to offer you. Be on time, please."

Promptly at the appointed hour, Miss Vaughn appeared in Stetson's office, accompanied by a veiled woman in black, whom Stetson identified as the shadowy sister—an identification that the girl confirmed by a formal presentation.

Rossi, Stetson's musical director, joined them, at the manager's summons, and they went at once into the great empty theater. Rossi seated himself at the piano in the vacant orchestra pit, the two girls went back, and Stetson stationed himself well to the rear of the auditorium.

Iris stepped out upon the big, dimly lighted stage. She was pale, and her

manner seemed nervous, to the watchful eyes upon her.

"Try the aria in the first act, 'True Love is Love for Aye,' if you please, Miss Vaughn," Stetson directed.

She sang it charmingly, lending new value to the cheaply sentimental lyric, with its yet more cheaply reminiscent melody. Stetson saw Rossi, temperamental and emotional despite his acquired American commercialism, lift his hands from the keys to applaud ecstatically. Stetson said:

"Now the laughing song in the third act, if you please. There's a part for you in 'The Moon Maid,' if you've got what I want."

She had, he decided, listening. He had reached this conclusion even before he got Rossi's verdict, which ran:

"Great voice! Clever stunt. Illusion's perfect."

"Don't think I get you, Rossi," he confessed.

But before the director could elucidate, the two girls joined them.

"You'll answer," Stetson told the aspirant, five minutes later in his private office. "Rôle's yours, Miss Vaughn."

To his surprise, the girl hesitated.

"Want it?"

"Terribly."

"Then where's the hitch? Terms?"

"No. It's—it's that I can't sing a note!" she blurted desperately.

"Repeat that, please. I don't get you. You mean?"

"What I say. I can't sing—never could. Absolutely tone deaf, they say."

Stetson stared at her in sheer amaze.

"But—but the voice——"

"My sister's. She studied with Scarlati, in Milan."

"Then—what—why——"

"This is why."

The veiled woman spoke for the first time. Scarcely less to her own surprise than to that of the two before her, for her sensitiveness made her shrink from the gaze of curious eyes, Marcia



"That's why," she said again. "Do you care to hear the details?" Stetson nodded, his eyes clinging to her face in a sort of fascinated horror.

Vaughn put back her veil. The face thus disclosed was a replica of Iris' save that a fearful livid burn had plowed its way diagonally across her right cheek, distorting a quondam loveliness even more vivid than her twin sister's into the semblance of a hideous comic mask. The scar was sufficiently disfiguring

when the face was in repose; when she spoke, the effect was ghastly.

"That's why," she said again. "Do you care to hear the details?"

Stetson nodded, his eyes clinging to her face in a sort of fascinated horror.

"It isn't a pretty story," the beautiful voice went on quietly. "I had made

a successful début, and was singing at La Scala, with a Metropolitan engagement in prospect, when one night the jealous wife of the Italian tenor I sang opposite threw vitriol in my face. Fortunately, her aim was poor, but it left me—as you see me now.”

The girl paused a moment. Even yet the sheer tragedy of the thing shook her; she had never learned to speak calmly of the wreck of her beauty and her musical career.

“I’ve my voice and figure left, of course,” she added presently, “but what’s the use? No manager would want me. I couldn’t even get pupils or a choir position. With a face like this, I can only sing off stage.”

A light had at last broken in upon Stetson.

“Then that’s the idea?”

“Yes. I’d seen it done in plays—in ‘Trilby,’ for example. Iris couldn’t sing, but she’s— Well, you’ve seen her. I had the voice, but my disfigurement—” She got herself in hand after a moment, and went on: “So we pooled our issues, worked up our act, showed it to an agent, tried it on a manager or two, and got our booking.”

“You sing off stage while your sister—runs a bluff?”

“Exactly. Iris sings in pantomime, while I supply the voice.”

“The illusion’s perfect.” Stetson unconsciously quoted Rossi.

“Yes, I think it is. Your director was wise to the scheme, but that doesn’t often happen.”

“I see,” said Stetson thoughtfully. He also saw the possibilities of Marcia

Vaughn’s voice. Certain plans were already shaping themselves in his brain.

Straightway he called into council a capable librettist, a successful score writer, and the invaluable Rossi, who, himself a composer of note, whipped into shape all Stetson’s musical productions. To these, the manager spoke briefly and to the point, outlining the idea he wished developed. What Stetson wanted went. The three promptly got busy.

Three months later, a new musical mélange, entitled “The Houri,” was “tried on the dog.” It went in Yonkers and repeated in New York.

It had lovely lyrics and a real plot—a novelty in musical comedy. The Oriental costumes, settings, and music, all held the subtle spell of the purple East. The prima donna who sang the rôle of *Haidee* in a manner that set the critics raving piqued popular interest by wearing a yashmak that concealed the lower half of her face until the finale, which was worth waiting for, since it revealed her the most dazzlingly beautiful thing that had dawned on blasé Broadway in a blue moon.

Iris Vaughn’s name flamed in electric on Broadway; billboards and ash cans blazoned her beauty; her costumes were copied by the *haute monde*; a new dance was christened in her honor; “Iris” perfumes and complexion powders attained an immediate and immense vogue. Could fame farther go?

Meantime, Marcia, who wasn’t featured on the bills, figured on the pay roll of the Stetson forces at a salary just five times that of her sister!

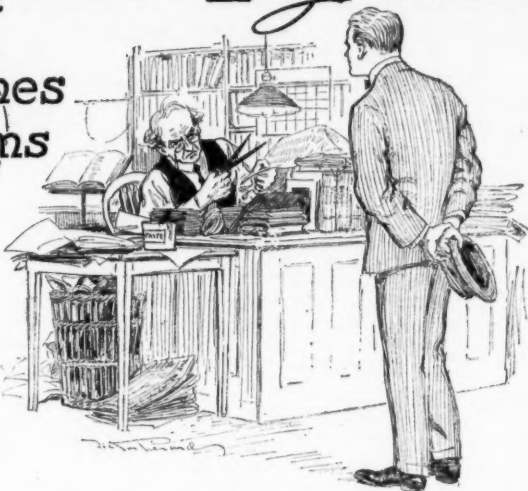


The Impudent Lady's Maid

By
Ben. Ames
Williams

ILLUSTRATED BY
VICTOR PERARD

A Blithe Adventure
of Mystery and Love



F. JOHNSON BLISS, A. B., A. M., Ph. D., et al, did not hesitate to admit that he was a philosopher. He would have preferred to continue his studies, but since his father insisted, and since his father held the whip hand, he was prepared to venture with the utmost resignation into more lucrative pursuits. His father's letter was not an hour old before his decision was made. He would become an author. The occupation offered, he felt, exceptional opportunities for avoiding that sex for which he acknowledged so stern an aversion. An author might still be a recluse. Furthermore, he was not without experience in his newly chosen field. Some months before, he had compiled a gripping little treatise upon "Some Anomalous Activities of Animalculæ," and had forwarded it in turn to each of several magazines. The uniform courtesy of the replies had delighted him, and in one case the regret at returning his manuscript had been obviously so keen that he had sent a

friendly and reassuring note to the editor.

He had no doubt he would succeed in the paths of literary effort. There was a young man of his acquaintance who had won laurels by his pen, and he was a distinctly commonplace young man. Encountering this acquaintance, by name Thompson, in the university library, Bliss, with the tone of one who honors an obscure profession, remarked:

"Thompson, I have decided to become an author."

The amazement of Thompson was most gratifying. It was succeeded by delight. Bliss found his hands seized and vigorously shaken.

"Great!" ejaculated the literary light. "Immense! You're sure to make a hit! Why, I'll read your stuff myself!"

"I am planning," Bliss explained, in a calm tone that should have sufficiently rebuked the other's exuberance, "a series of theses on the lack of a homing instinct in amœba. I have delved——"

The eyes of Thompson lighted hungrily.

"Now, now, F. J.," he expostulated, "don't waste yourself! Fiction! There's your field! Blood, thunder, thrills, love——"

"Oh, I could never write of——"

"W-e-e-ll, the women like it."

"Bother the women!" Bliss exploded, but he had the grace to flush. "Also, I am conscious of a lack of experience in the other matters——"

"Oh, that's easy. You just go out and have adventures, then write about them." Thompson paused, with his mouth half open, his eyes dreamy. Then his gaze studied the calm countenance of Mr. Bliss. "I've got it, F. J.!" he cried. "You must get a job as a reporter—on the *Evening Blast*. Greatest sort of training for—er—literature."

F. Johnson Bliss was perturbed.

"You know I never read newspapers——"

"Fine! Better yet! Fresh, unspoiled viewpoint, and all that. Just you go to the *Blast* office, put up a front, be masterful, make them hire you. Here! I know! Ask the editor for a hard assignment, a sticker—interviewing a wild-eyed millionaire or something. He'll give it to you to be rid of you. Then all you have to do is go out and get the interview, and you've got your job. I've written dozens of newspaper stories, and it always works that way."

Imperceptibly, the eye of F. Johnson Bliss began to sparkle, his back straightened, he drew a deep breath in the manner prescribed in his physical-training manual. As Thompson finished, he thrust out a sinewy hand.

"By—by—by goodness, Thompson, I'll do it!" he cried, and marched from the room.

For some little time after his departure, his friend Thompson surrendered to strenuous, but happy, tears.

It was amazingly easy to find the

office of the *Blast*. One simply consulted the directory. F. Johnson Bliss told the elevator man that he wished to see the editor, and was presently deposited in a waiting room, before a door that bore a crudely printed sign advising all comers that this, the sanctum, was inviolate. Bliss had read the sign twice, and was starting a third perusal, when the door burst violently open and a chubby young man, with his hands full of newspapers, charged into his arms. Bliss snatched at opportunity.

"Your pardon," he asked politely. "Is there an office boy in attendance at this door?"

The chubby young man looked over Bliss' shoulder and screamed, "Down!" with such frantic entreaty that Bliss instinctively ducked. The young man shouted, as he fled toward the elevator:

"S'posed to be, but you'd better butt right in!"

Bliss remembered the advice of Thompson. He must be masterful. He opened the door and entered, over the dead body of the "No Admittance" sign. Skirmishes with office boys—affairs from which he gained confidence by observing the awe his dignity inspired—brought him, presently, into a cubby-hole where a man sat behind a desk that foamed with newspapers.

The editor—his name was Scott—was an extremely taciturn man. A habit of looking over his spectacles had given him four deep parallel wrinkles across his forehead. He seemed to have many things to worry about.

"What is it?" he asked, when Bliss was seated.

"I wish a position."

"Position—or job?"

"I desire to become a reporter."

"Experience?"

"I have never done any newspaper work."

"Sorry," said Mr. Scott, and appeared to consider this a dismissal, for he dived into the froth of papers till

only the sparsely covered top of his head was visible.

After a moment, he looked up and, seeing that Bliss was still there, snapped, "No!"

Bliss was a man of determination. He swallowed his heart.

"Er—Mr. Scott," he began, and was surprised at the froglike croak in his voice, "is it not customary, in the case of a bothersome applicant for a position, to give him some hopeless task to—er—discourage him?"

The editor dropped his jaw.

"GoodGod!" he exclaimed, all in one word, in a tone of wonder.

"Suppose," Bliss hurriedly suggested, "you give me a task of that nature. I will undertake to perform it."

Mr. Scott studied the young man over his spectacles. Then, with the air of one trying an interesting experiment in a skeptical frame of mind, he inquired:

"Know the Murray case?"

"I had not heard of it," Bliss replied. "In what jurisdiction was it tried?"

The editor made a peculiar noise through his nose, as if there was high internal pressure, then exploded in three sentences:

"Dammit, go read the papers! Go find the Murray necklace! God sake get out!"

F. Johnson Bliss found himself in a somewhat dazed condition as he reached the sidewalk. Of the Murray case, or the Murray necklace, he knew—to be explicit—nothing. But habit does grip a man. Heretofore, whenever Bliss had found himself in a quandary and far from the nearest library, he had known but one source of information. He remembered this now, and was guided by his previous experiences. He would ask a policeman. He found one at a crossing, and did so.

"Officer," he inquired, "what is the Murray case?"

The crossing man waved along the traffic.

"Huh?" he said.

"And where, if you please, can I find the Murray necklace?"

The bluecoat grinned.

"An', if I knowed that, w'u'd I be wearin' out shoe leather here?" he exclaimed.

Bliss elucidated.

"I am a reporter," he said. "I have been instructed to find the Murray necklace, and I don't know where it is."

"Poor felly!" the patrolman sympathized. "Now, if I wuz in your shoes, wid nothin' better to be doin', I'd run out to Westville an' inquire aroun'. Mebbe some of the neighbors can be after tellin' ye."

"Westville?"

"Aye, that's where the Murrays lives."

"I thank you, sir," Bliss assured him. "I shall take your advice."

And he did, leaving the officer with a pleased smile and a pleasant something in his palm.

To speak of the town of Westville in prose is almost insult. It is one of nature's songs—a bewitching harmony of woodland and meadow, of beautiful homes and smoothly flowing roads. The rounded hills are the sweet, warm bosoms of Mother Earth; the fields melt into grain and all the riches of the soil. In every fence corner, gnarled apple trees drip fruit of an indescribable savor. On a sunny day, you feel Westville could never be cloudy, and on a cloudy day you do not miss the sun. It must be confessed, however, that when F. Johnson Bliss dropped off a very dusty, smoky train, and inquired his way, he was in no laudatory mood.

"Keep a-goin'," he was advised, and, by adhering strictly to this injunction, he shortly found himself in Westville Square, where a grocery store seemed to offer the most likely information bureau.

The grocer was a small, fat man, whose face was lined with horizontal wrinkles, and his neck likewise, so that at first sight one received a strong impression that at some plastic stage of his development he had been stepped upon. To carry out the illusion, his head, which was bald, was distinctly flat on top.

"You know them?" he inquired shrilly, when Bliss asked the nearest way to the Murray estate.

"I hope to, my dear sir."

The grocer shook his head with an air of mystery.

"Queer doin's up t' that house," he declared. "That there necklace bizness—why, our p'lice 'u'd have found it in no time, but the missis brung in them dude detectifs f'om Boston, an' they're still a-scratchin' an' a-diggin', an' hain't found nothin', neither."

"Necklace?" Bliss repeated, a little carried off his feet.

The grocer peered at him curiously.

"Good gosh, man!" he exclaimed. "Ain't you heerd how that di'mond necklace was stole two weeks ago?" Mr. Bliss evidently had not heard, and the grocer added: "Di'monds an' pearls—wuth a hundred thousand dollars, the papers say."

"That can hardly be possible—so much," Bliss objected.

"I reckon you know all about it, eh?"

"No, no! I don't," Bliss protested. "How was it stolen?"

The grocer loved an audience.

"F'om a secret drawer in Mis' Murray's boodwar," he declared. "They wuz a big dance up t' the house. Mis' Murray didn't wear the necklace t' the dance, but when she went to look at it afterwud, it was gone."

"Goodness!" Bliss exclaimed.

"Yassir. Mis' Murray, she like to had a fit. She claimed her maid had stole it, an' the girl quit her. Mis' Murray didn't dare have her arrested. Then

they sent for Chief Perry, an' he'd ha' showed 'em somethin'; but they called in them dude detectifs, an' he quit; an' since then the detectifs has drawed their pay, an' that's all."

"Who—who is Mr. Murray?" Bliss asked hesitantly.

The grocer knew.

"West'ner," he said. "Made some money in Chicago, an' come East so's his wife could cut a swath. She ain't done it to hurt, though."

Bliss winnowed the old man clean, and at last, upon his repeated inquiry, the grocer came to his door to show the road to the Murray home. As the young man started away, he heard the fat little grocer call a final warning.

"Look out for the missis!" he shrilled. "She's a ripsnorter!"

Bliss took the road to the Murray estate at a brisk gait, inhaling for five paces, then exhaling for an equal number, an exercise he had found invaluable for remedying a hollow chest. But after proceeding the better part of a mile, he rounded a turn in the road and came upon a sight that sent his careful respiration a-skittering. A dozen yards ahead, half out of the road, its right front wheel jacked clear of the ground, stood a limousine, and beside the crippled wheel knelt a girl.

Bliss did not even see the limousine. His unwilling eyes were held by the vision of the young person kneeling there, and never afterward was he able to forget the smallest detail of her bent figure. She wore the uniform of a lady's maid, the somber black of her dress relieved by a white frill of collar that framed her neck and head like the calyx of some glorious flower. Bliss had always shunned the sex of which this girl was so delightful an example, and, as he looked upon the little lady's maid, his most earnest desire was to turn, to run, to leap the ditch and vanish into the woods; in short, to flee, to escape.



"Oh, do put on your coat, Gerald!" Mrs. Murray shrielled, as he approached.
 "You're positively common!"

But what he did was to stand and drink her in with all his eyes.

She had brown hair, and a great deal of it. It flowered about her small head and clustered along the nape of her slender neck. She was very intent upon the tire as she knelt there, so much so that she seemed not to have discovered Bliss. But not so the occupant of the car. A head protruded from the window, and a shrill voice called:

"Boy! Man! Come here!"

Bliss felt a hot distaste, yet, like a somnambulist, he obeyed the summons. The kneeling girl settled back upon her heels and regarded him with open hostility. He half expected she would throw the tire wrench at him.

"I don't need any help, Mrs. Murray," she said silkily.

Hearing that name, Bliss looked with new interest at the woman in the car. Mrs. Murray was fifty, managed to look forty, dressed thirty, and acted—when

she minded her manners—perhaps twenty. Just now, being annoyed, she would have passed for sixty.

"Boy," she snapped, "do you know anything about automobiles?"

"Yes, madam," Bliss told her frankly. "I know everything about automobiles."

"Well, then, do something to that tire," Mrs. Murray commanded. "That little ninny can't, and I don't want to sit here all day."

Bliss bowed, and stepped toward the crippled wheel. The girl moved grudgingly out of his way.

"Hate yourself, don't you?" she whispered fiercely.

This was over Bliss' head, but something in her eye made him uncomfortable. He fell to work on the tire, conscious that from the limousine was issuing a steady drip of querulous conversation.

It is, at best, a hot and disordering job to change a tire, and Bliss was by nature fastidious. He was not made more comfortable by the knowledge that the girl was watching him with some amusement.

"Have you patched the tube?" he asked her.

"I—wasn't sure that was what it needed," she told him sweetly.

So Bliss proceeded, with what resignation he could muster, to extract the tube from the shoe and examine it for a puncture. Whereupon, he plunged headforemost into a mystery that left him trembling.

"Why—what's the matter with it?" he asked hazily.

Mrs. Murray made reply.

"The car just stopped," she fretted, "and Smith got out, and I heard a little hissing, and she said the tire was fat, or something."

"Flat?" Bliss suggested.

"It sounded like fat," insisted Mrs. Murray.

"There's not a thing the——" Bliss began, then stuttered into silence, for

the girl, behind the car and thus hidden from Mrs. Murray, had hushed him with a peremptory downward gesture of her clenched fist.

Bliss swallowed his words and, under the bath of Mrs. Murray's laments, replaced the tube and toiled over the pump. The tire inflated perfectly. As he had been about to assert, there was nothing whatever the matter with it. Mrs. Murray's maid, for her own purposes, had delayed that lady here upon the road. Her conduct had been most deceitful. Upon the moment, he was sure she knew something of the neck-lace.

"It's all right now," he told Mrs. Murray, and cast a glance of cold reproach upon the maid. He was rather disconcerted when, upon meeting his eye, she giggled.

But at that moment a man appeared, striding along the way Bliss had come. He was a short, stout man, whose face always looked as if it could be no redder, yet continually exceeded expectations in this respect. His coat was on his arm, his pipe askew in his mouth. He looked, Bliss thought, like a hod-carrier. He was, in fact, Mr. Murray.

"Oh, do put on your coat, Gerald!" Mrs. Murray shrielled, as he approached. "You're positively common!"

"Common as dirt," he agreed. "Cut that 'Gerald' business. Is this what you call meeting me at the station? What's the use my having automobiles? Shoot along home. I'm hot."

The maid, Smith, covered her costume with a raincoat from the front seat and prepared to take the wheel. But her movement drew an instant protest from Mrs. Murray:

"Smith! Smith! Don't you start this car! I won't stay in it, if you drive! I won't!"

"Where's Jenkins?" Mr. Murray demanded.

"Oh, I don't know," his wife wailed. "I couldn't find him, and Smith offered

to drive me down, and the tire burst, and this man fixed it."

Mr. Murray seemed to see Bliss for the first time. He scrutinized the young man for a moment.

"Say," he inquired, "can you run this thing? I can't, and my wife can't, and she won't let the girl do it."

"I can drive any car," said Bliss simply.

Mr. Murray grinned.

"Run us home, then," he ordered, and seemed to consider the matter settled.

Bliss, with some hesitation, climbed to the seat; the girl dropped into place beside him. He turned the car and started toward the Murray home.

Now, Bliss did well those things that he undertook. He had made a study of the theory and practice of motor-driven vehicles, and he tooled the heavy limousine along the shaded road with a smooth precision that Jenkins had never equaled. Mr. Murray was a shrewd Irishman who had acquired a fortune by discovering what other people could do best and then setting them to work at it. When Bliss brought the car to a stop at the Murray home, and Mrs. Murray and the maid had crossed the broad veranda to the house, he caught Bliss by the shoulder.

"Young fellow," he snapped, "want a job?"

Bliss bridled, would have spoken, but—

"Want a job—as my chauffeur?"

Bliss turned pale with rage.

"Sir!" he began, intending to scorch Mr. Murray to a cinder; but that gentleman was fireproof.

"You can do it!" he cried. "You surely can drive a car, and I'll chance your being as honest as Jenkins."

Bliss felt like a swimmer caught by the undertow. He was getting beyond his depth. People talked too fast. He did not wish to be a chauffeur. He started to say so, but found himself

thrust into his place at the wheel of the limousine.

"Wages'll be all right," Mr. Murray ejaculated. "You're hired. Haven't time to argue now. Run that car round to the garage."

He dashed across the veranda to the house and disappeared just as Bliss found his voice. But it was then too late. Even though he did refuse the place, Bliss reasoned, there was no one to hear him. With a helpless feeling that there was nothing else to do, he obeyed Mr. Murray's order and nosed the limousine around the drive to the garage.

With the limousine safely bestowed in its place, Bliss emerged, rather dazed, to consider his plight in the open air. His first thought was that he had been trapped; his first feeling a panicky desire to flee. Soberer consideration, however, convinced him that his present situation was the result of immense good fortune.

"It is conceivable," he told himself, "that I may thus discover circumstances that will assist me in locating this necklace."

The Murray house was set upon a knoll closely girt with trees, so that the branches all but brushed the weatherboards. The garage was a little below the house, a stone structure, masked in greenery like some hidden fortress. To one side were the stables, to the other a prosaic row of model chicken houses. Below these buildings spread a meadow, through the center of which threaded a chuckling little brook. A path led off across the meadow, beyond the chicken houses, a rough cart track winding away in the opposite direction, past the stables.

Bliss had halted a little above the garage to look about him at the well-kept grounds, when a voice at his shoulder caustically inquired:

"Well, does it suit you?"

He whirled, to discover a tall, calm

young man in flannels, whose perfect ease of manner was somewhat belied, Bliss thought, by the shadows about his eyes.

"It is most attractive," he assented. "The meadow——"

The other interrupted lazily:

"Never mind now. Come into the house. Dad wants to talk to you."

Bliss, obeying, was somewhat curtly ushered into the living room, where what looked like a court of justice was assembled. As Bliss entered by one door, a tearful housemaid, with a bandage about her head, came in at the other. Mr. Murray was pacing back and forth across one end of the room, while Mrs. Murray, who expressed all emotions by hysterics, was enjoying a mild attack of them upon a divan behind her husband. Smith, the pretty maid who had malingered with the lismusine, was trying to appear at ease in the corner behind Mrs. Murray. As Bliss entered the room, Mr. Murray fired a question at him, like a shot across his bows, and brought him up all standing.

"Were you ever in my wife's room?" he shouted.

Bliss flushed painfully.

"Nonsense!" he protested, and was conscious that the pretty eye of Smith, the maid, was observing his discomfiture with the keenest relish.

"I reckon you weren't," Mr. Murray reluctantly admitted, "but I'm going to get to the bottom of this. Too much mystery here to suit me. Some one just clubbed this girl on the head." He gestured toward the tearful housemaid. "It's got to stop! Got to stop, I say!" He bellowed this last to the world in general; then, catching sight of a new and bulky figure in the doorway, shouted: "Well, what's the matter now?"

"The intruder coughed importantly.

"Mr. Murray," he said, "I regret to

say that, in spite of my precautions, your wife's necklace has been stolen."

"Say, look here, Kearns," howled the excitable little man, "don't you try to string me!"

"I mean to say——" began the newcomer, while Mrs. Murray kicked her heels helplessly upon the divan, "ah—that is, when I was called into this case, I at once searched Mrs. Murray's boudoir, and I discovered the necklace."

Mrs. Murray screamed and collapsed. Mr. Murray swelled like a crimson balloon. The detective confessed awkwardly:

"It was hidden behind a picture on the wall. I saw that the thief had been surprised in his work, and had been forced to hide it there and escape. I should have restored it to you then; but, sir, I was ambitious to catch the thief when he returned for it—and so—ah—I left it there."

For a space, Mr. Murray spoke hurriedly, and with some heat. Bliss gathered that the tearful maid had been struck down, while in Mrs. Murray's rooms, by the thief who now—according to the detective—had finally escaped with the gems. Mr. Murray stated this case plainly to the disconcerted sleuth, and that gentleman assented with so many wooden nods.

"Percy, did you hear anything?" Mr. Murray at last demanded of his son, the young man who had summoned Bliss.

"Not a sound, dad. I was in my room. Didn't hear a sound." But his meditative eye turned upon Smith, the maid.

"Say, mother," he asked slowly, "how about that breakdown you had? Mighty convenient it was—keeping you away while the thief ransacked your rooms."

Mrs. Murray was still too overcome to do more than gasp and point toward Smith. All eyes turned that way, and Percy sharply inquired:

"Come! What happened to delay you an hour that way?"

Bliss, every detective nerve in him a-tingle, waited to see how the maid would save herself. To his surprise, she began to cry softly into her handkerchief. He was strangely shaken. Women should not cry in public. He thought of withdrawing, but had not ventured a step toward the door when the girl suddenly averted the spotlight to him by sobbing:

"I d-don't know. I t-tried to f-fix it, and I c-couldn't, and then he"—she pointed accusingly at the startled Bliss—"he came along and fixed it."

They whirled with one accord on Bliss, and Mr. Murray snapped:

"Yes, that's right. You fixed it. What was the matter with it, anyway?"

This was Bliss' opportunity to assert himself, to show the creature he was not one to stand trifling, to denounce her trickery, and to rank himself on the side of justice and truth. Yet, somehow, his lips would not shape the words, and he heard himself brazenly reply:

"The tire was flat. The valve plunger had worked loose. It was easily repaired, but not a thing one would notice unless one happened to inspect the valve."

He had told a lie for an impudent lady's maid. The fact burst upon him, and instantly he was quite sure that, through that filmy handkerchief, a perfectly tearless eye was mocking him.

And so the conference ended at a blank wall, and Bliss, with that lie upon his soul, returned to the garage. There, for the first time, he encountered Jenkins, a crude person, broad and solid, with a heavy, hungry chin. Bliss disliked him, and it was obvious from the first that he disapproved of Bliss. Perhaps he felt that this new chauffeur might yet displace him. Bliss ignored his hostility, inspected the quarters provided for him and Jenkins above the garage, then set off for the village, to

arrange for the forwarding of necessary clothing from the city. He would have telephoned from the Murray estate, but feared thus to disclose his identity. His blood was warming to the adventure, and when his own affairs were arranged, he bethought himself of the *Evening Blast*, and got Mr. Scott, the editor, upon the wire.

"This is F. Johnson Bliss," he explained, "whom you instructed to find the Murray necklace."

"Well, what of it?" the editor snapped.

"It has been stolen again."

Inarticulate sounds came over the wire. They expressed amazement and disbelief.

"Nevertheless," Bliss promised, "I shall find it and deliver it to you."

Mr. Scott's voice was an awed whisper.

"What do I want with it?" he humbly inquired.

"Would it not be a triumph for the paper?"

The editor was slow in answering, but at length remarked:

"You're quite a newspaper man."

"Yes," said Bliss; and, after he had told what other facts he knew, he set out on the return to the Murray estate.

Of one thing, as he meditated, he became convinced: Between the deceit by which the impudent lady's maid had delayed Mrs. Murray upon the road and the fact that at that moment—at the time when the second theft had occurred—the man Jenkins had been missing, there must be a sinister connection. Bliss did not relish the thought. Of Jenkins he could believe anything; but to connect that exquisite—though disturbing—girl and the brutal man was distasteful.

Nevertheless, the logic of the situation was not to be denied. All women are deceitful. There was no reason to suppose that this girl was an exception. She had, Bliss decided, a mocking eye;



"Don't you want to rest before you start up the hill?" she suggested.

furthermore, there was something unsettling about the manner of her laugh. As he strode along, he decided to watch her—to watch her and to watch Jenkins.

"One or the other," he assured himself, "is sure to give me a—er—clew."

And at that, remembering his literary friend, Thompson, he told himself complacently:

"I'll warrant Thompson himself could have done no better than I."

Bliss, in the swift passage of the past few hours, was become a new man. Presently he would realize this, and be much abashed. Just now he was too engrossed for introspection. Jenkins and the impudent lady's maid, the maid and Jenkins—these he must watch.

Whereupon, approaching his destination, he came face to face with the girl herself. She was just emerging from the garage, and when she saw him, she halted, with a little exclamation of dismay. One hand flew to her throat, and for an instant they stared at each other, each taken by surprise. Then suddenly she tilted back her chin and laughed delightedly.

"You weren't afraid of me, were you?" she asked mischievously.

There awoke in him that distrust always inspired in the wise by a woman who seeks to charm. Jenkins and this girl, he reminded himself, were the two he must watch; for Jenkins had stolen the necklace while this impudent maid had delayed Mrs. Murray on the road.

"Where's Jenkins?" he countered.

"The Murrays are dining out. He drove them. Aren't you coming to supper?"

"Oh, supper?" He was puzzling over her errand in the garage.

She chuckled.

"Come," she invited. "I won't bite."

And, as he followed her toward the house, he found the answer to his unspoken question. Jenkins, of course, after purloining the gems that morning, had hidden them in an agreed place in the garage. This girl now had secured them, and he guessed that she would at once try to escape. Watch the girl! That was his cue.

Having eaten, he took up his vigil in the shadow of a hemlock behind the house. He was so sure of his conclusion that it scarce aroused a thrill when the girl actually appeared, stole stealthily across the piazza, slipped down the steps, and merged into the night.

He watched her dark figure glide down the path toward the meadow, and followed, stepping softly, listening for her footsteps ahead till he heard her break into a run. When any creature flees, it is instinct to pursue. Bliss sprinted after the girl at top speed, and in twoscore paces pulled up short in confusion. For she had halted beside a tree on the brook bank and, with her back against the tree, her hands behind her, her breast heaving with deep inhalations, was awaiting his coming.

Having overtaken her, Bliss was at a loss. Facing her there, he admitted to himself, for the first time, that in appearance she was not displeasing. Her eyes were so wide and sparkling that even in the dark they were glowingly visible. Her hair was a soft, rich shadow about her white little face. He was, of a sudden, profoundly disturbed, and remembered that a like emotion had afflicted him at each of their encounters. The thought put him upon his guard, for their first meeting had moved him to act a falsehood, and their second had impelled him to a downright lie. He had just determined that this time, at

least, he would dominate the interview, when she coldly demanded:

"Well, what do you want?"

Thrust thus upon the defensive, memory of his wrongs flooded upon him.

"I want to know what you mean by making me tell lies!" he hotly responded.

She seized her advantage.

"I'm sure I never asked you to tell lies," she loftily disclaimed.

"About mending the car!" he blurted, confused and angry.

"Mending the car?" Her tone expressed polite surprise. "Why, I don't remember your mending the car. Or was there really something the matter with it, after all?"

He all but shouted:

"No, there was not! There was nothing the matter, and you knew it! What purpose had you in keeping Mrs. Murray there in the sun?"

"Poor Mrs. Murray!" she giggled. "It was awfully funny when she called you, though. Were you as frightened as you looked?"

In measured tones, he repeated: "Why—did—you—keep—Mrs.—Murray—there—in—the—car?"

The girl passed from mirth to anger.

"See here," she flared, "don't you accuse me! If there was nothing wrong with that tire, you should have said so when you had the chance!" He tried to interrupt, but she overrode him. "Be still! I'm not obliged to answer your old questions. It's funny if I can't take a—walk——"

She fell silent, listening, and Bliss heard, from somewhere in the dark ahead, a low, peculiar whistle. As it ceased, she looked at him.

"Good night!" she snapped, and started along the path.

He hesitated only an instant, yet that was long enough to lose her, and when he listened for her footsteps, they were gone. In a panic of haste, he scurried along the path, crossed the brook, and

ascended a little slope till the path vanished in a clump of pines. The girl was nowhere to be seen, but as he reached the pines, from somewhere beyond them came that peculiar whistle. He pushed through the waxy branches to the farther side.

Not fifty feet below him, in a narrow stretch of meadow between the pines and the road, the girl and a man stood talking. Bliss could scarcely have seen them had not the man flashed an electric lamp. The faint murmur of their voices came to him, and then he saw the girl draw from the bosom of her dress and hand to the man a flat white packet. Beyond a doubt—the Murray necklace!

In another moment, Bliss would have sprung toward them, but a long pine needle tickled his nostril, and he sneezed—a terrific sneeze. The two sprang apart like surprised lovers, looking all ways at once. As for Bliss, he went stark mad, and bounded down the slope, running in great strides toward the two, whispering threats as he ran. He heard the girl's shrill warning: "Run! Run! Get away!" And he saw the man, without parley, turn tail and sprint in one direction while the girl ran in the other.

Bliss, berserk, started after the man. He swore to catch him and recover the necklace, though it prove necessary to tear the fugitive to bits to accomplish the feat. And perhaps he might have done it, but, from somewhere behind him, the girl screamed, a gasping, choking cry of supreme pain.

It was as if a rope had dropped about Bliss' shoulders. With scarce a regretful glance for the fleeing man, he turned back to the girl. She was a fluttering black heap upon the ground, twitching, and moaning aloud; but as he approached, she twisted herself up to face him.

"What is it?" he demanded crossly. "What have you done?"

"You!" she snapped. "I might have

known!" Then she seemed to realize that her words were ungracious, and wept: "I've sprained my ankle—dreadfully!"

He knelt briskly before her.

"Which?" he commanded. "Quick! Let me see it!"

In the manner of a physician, he laid a hand upon the hem of her dress. She thrust it viciously away.

"Don't you dare touch me!" she protested hysterically.

"But you must let me attend it, else it will become all the more painful and dangerous."

She buried her face in her hands.

"Don't you touch me!" she miserably insisted. "I won't let you touch my ankle!"

"You idiotic child!" he scolded.

She dried her tears and pulled herself painfully to her feet. He heard her teeth grit at the pain. She took one forward step, then collapsed in a shaking little heap, and her weeping broke out afresh.

"W-why d-don't you d-d-do something?" she demanded.

"You are ridiculous," he told her, with dignity, "to put false modesty before the possibility of a permanently injured joint. What do you desire me to do?"

"If you would h-h-h-help me, I m-might be able to w-w-walk."

"If you put an ounce of weight on that ankle," he assured her, "it may cripple you for life! Let me carry you to the house."

She studied him curiously, head bent.

"Could you?" she asked. "You're very—slender."

"I can carry you as far as you like, Miss Smith," he stiffly assured her.

"I'll tell you," she decided. "You let me try to walk—with your arm—and if I can't, you may carry me."

In dignified silence, he lifted her to her feet. She clung to his arm. It was the first time they had touched each

other. As he helped her up the slope, she moaned once, and he could see that she was near to tears. She was very little. He could look down on the top of her head. The fragrance of her brown hair clouded up into his face. He felt a little dizzy. A decidedly interesting experience. They reached the pines, moving more and more slowly.

"I'm doing finely—am I not?" she quavered.

"Finely," he assured her, then blamed himself; for, at his word, she looked up and tried to smile, and her foot caught in some unheeded root in the path. She gasped with pain, and hung upon his arm so that he felt the full, sweet weight of her. Before he realized his own action, he had swept her up into his arms.

After that first exclamation, when she had tripped, the girl had made no sound. She lay so close against his breast he thought she must have fainted. But as he looked down, in sudden alarm at her silence, she opened her eyes and smiled up at him.

Bliss knew, upon the instant, that no man can afford to miss the experience of holding a lovely girl in his arms and looking down into her smiling face. The next moment, he was sternly reminding himself that she was at best a lady's maid, and at worst a thief; while he, though masquerading, was a scholar and a gentleman.

At the end of a hundred paces, he felt perspiration on his brow, and his breath came short. Not for anything would he have admitted his distress, but it was with profound relief that he saw the brook ahead.

"I must set you down here," he explained, "while I find a spot sufficiently narrow so that I can lift you across."

"My, but you are strong!" she praised. And when he returned, after finding such a spot as he sought, she volunteered: "My ankle doesn't hurt nearly so much now."

"It's only that the pain is deadened," he warned her; then lifted her again, an arm beneath her knees, another beneath her shoulders. She hung limply now, and it was so awkward that he was forced to suggest:

"If you hold on to me, it will be easier."

"Oh!" she gasped, a smothered little ejaculation, and stirred in his arms as if she would have drawn away from him. But this was only momentary. Then she reached up her arms and twined them around his neck. He found it difficult to breathe, but was content to plod ahead till they reached the last ascent below the house.

"Don't you want to rest before you start up the hill?" she suggested.

He found a patch of smooth turf and lowered her to the ground. A full moon had risen, and its radiance dimly illuminated the meadow and set the night mists twisting into strange, fairy-like shapes.

"My 'ankle's better now," she whispered, when he did not speak.

She was leaning on one arm, smiling gloriously, eyes dewy with those so recent tears. He was conscious of a delightful peace and happiness that had never been his before in woman's presence. He was not only content to be here with this girl—he was enjoying the sensation. He understood, for the first time, that moon witchery of which poets love to sing. Sitting there beside her, Bliss gave himself utterly to these pleasant reflections, with no premonition that they were soon to become wormwood in his mouth. It was she who first moved to go.

"I think——" she began.

"Oh, I'm sorry!" he cried. "I should have remembered!"

She shook with a sob, or a spasm of pain, as he lifted her; and, while she nestled against his breast, he began that last steep ascent. He was tired, and made hard work of it, so that by the

time he reached the top he was panting and shaking with fatigue. Then, while they were still in the shadow of the trees, the girl stirred in his arms. He looked down and saw in her eyes a new light that chilled and angered him, even before she spoke.

"I think," she said coldly, "I think I might as well walk from here."

"Nonsense!" he protested, for at first he did not understand. "You can't——"

"Let me down!" she insisted sharply. "Let me down!"

She thrust with her hands against his chest, and, confused and uncertain, he allowed his arms to relax so that she gained her feet, then pulled herself erect and turned to face him.

There was no trace of weakness about her now. She was smiling faintly, and Bliss went suddenly sick with humiliation to think how she had tricked him. She made him a grave little bow and softly laughed:

"I thank you for a very pleasant ride, kind sir!"

And then she turned and walked—steadily, and without a trace of a limp—up the slope to the kitchen.

Bliss hated the girl, the world, the moon, the necklace, and himself. Arms aching, heart pounding, muscles fairly cracking from their labor, he watched her disappear into the house, then turned to the garage. He was raging, and in the garage his rage found an outlet.

For Jenkins was there, at the telephone, and the demeanor of Jenkins was most remarkable. Bliss had just perceived this when Jenkins heard his footsteps and whirled from the instrument to shout:

"What are you snooping around for, you snipe?"

Bliss removed his spectacles and bestowed them in their case. Outwardly calm, he was inwardly ablaze, and the possibility of manhandling Jenkins, by

way of revenge upon the lady's maid, was not unpleasant.

"Your tone and your language are insulting, my friend," he said.

Jenkins gasped with amazement.

"You—you——" he choked. "I'll—I'll——"

"Quite so," Bliss responded. "Please do."

Jenkins tried. Credit him with that. But his swing was slow in starting. In other words, he telegraphed his punch. Bliss had numbered boxing among the sciences in his curriculum, and, by a sweet coördination of the muscles of calf, thigh, side, shoulder, and arm, he brought home his fist upon the chin of Jenkins with such smart precision that Jenkins was taken aback. In fact, he was taken some two yards back, there colliding with the wall and slumping limply to the floor.

Through the safety valve of that blow, the fury of Bliss was translated into perfect peace; and so he left Jenkins, who was slowly and experimentally wagging his head between his hands, and proceeded up the stairs to the quarters above the garage. He had some thought of retiring, for the day had been long and strenuous, but an instinct of caution prompted him to wait the coming of Jenkins.

Jenkins, however, did not come. Bliss heard him moving about below for a time, then his footsteps were gone, and Bliss realized that he had left the garage. His determination to watch Jenkins and the girl returned to his mind. He leaped to the stairs, and in a moment was upon the trail. It had become cloudy, and the moonlight was so obscured that objects were but dimly visible. Immediately about the house, in the shadow of the trees, there was all the gloom and mystery of a cave. But Bliss, from the garage door, caught a glimpse of Jenkins' skulking figure and pursued.

Jenkins went stealthily around the

house, and finally crouched beside a rhododendron at the veranda steps. Bliss crept as close as he dared and waited to see what was to happen. He was perhaps ten yards from the crouching figure when the house door opened and a man appeared and came briskly toward the steps.

To Bliss, this man was a stranger; but Jenkins rose to confront him, and Bliss heard his eager question:

"It's me—Jenkins! Did you get it, Jim?"

It? The necklace, inevitably! The shock of this certainty held Bliss petrified for as long as it took the men to vanish in the shadow of the trees toward the garage. Bliss, with too much caution, crept that way. He was so slow that when he came in sight of the garage, the men were not to be seen. Crouching in the shadow of the trees, he watched.

There were to the garage four doors, two large ones for the cars, and two smaller, one at either end, that led to a cellar beneath the building. Bliss had not, during his day as a chauffeur, invaded that cellar. Now, however, he saw that one of the small doors was open, and, while he looked, there flashed in the black rectangle a pale oval, the oval of a face that appeared and disappeared. Listening, Bliss thought he heard the step of one descending the cellar stair.



Bliss' warning cry was drowned by the stuttering discharge of Percy's pistol before the lamp crashed against his head.

He stole across the driveway to that open door, leaned in, and strove to pierce with his eyes the blackness below. After a moment, he heard a faint shuffling sound from the farther end of the cellar. While he was thus intent, there came a step behind him, a sharp thrust between his shoulder blades, and he toppled, spinning, down the narrow stair.

It seemed an eternity that he fell, clutching vainly for a handrail to save himself. He heard the slam of the door through which he had been thrust, heard a stifled exclamation in a femi-

nine voice from somewhere within the cellar, and then he reached the cement floor. His head arrived there first, and it seemed that the clouds had cleared away, that the heavens were ablaze with stars, and that every one of them was falling straight in his direction.

The stars, one after another, impacted squarely between his eyes and scattered into a myriad of new and remarkably brilliant constellations; after which he slept, and presently awoke to find himself holding desperately to an ankle. The ankle was his first contact with returning consciousness, and he held it firmly lest it escape. Its remarkable slenderness and firmness and general dainty charm impressed themselves upon him long before a voice pleaded from somewhere in the void above his head:

"Oh, aren't you ever going to come to?"

Soft and gentle hands, dipped in water of a grateful coolness, chafed his forehead. He opened his eyes, but could see nothing at all. It was all most confusing, and, to bring matters to a plain, terra-firma basis, he confidently remarked:

"I am 'to,' thank you."

The chafing stopped, the ankle stirred tentatively.

"Will you please let go of—me, then?" said the same voice.

Though he thought he recognized that voice, he begged:

"Oh—who is 'me,' please?"

"Jo—Miss Smith—the maid," came the meek reply.

"Ah, yes," he murmured dreamily. "And how is your—er—ankle?" He stroked that member gently. "It seems to have mended with remarkable speed." He was dreamily deciding that "Jo" was just the name he would have chosen for her, and, so dreaming, made no move to stir from where he lay, head cradled in her lap. But she was less complaisant, and swiftly shifted her po-

sition so that his head bumped a second time upon the floor. He scrambled shakily to his feet, and in the darkness heard her brushing at her clothing and making the minor repairs in her personal appearance that are a woman's first thought in moments of disturbance. Bliss ventured to put into words his curiosity as to their situation.

"We're locked in the garage cellar," the girl explained.

"The last chapter, so far as I am concerned," he said, "saw me trailing Jenkins and another toward this garage. I saw some one in the cellar door, peered in, and some one—one of them, I presume—did the rest."

He heard her stirring nervously.

"I did the same thing," she admitted. "I saw them meet at the front steps. I had seen the man that came out up in Percy's room. There's a tree from which you can look right in his window." Her voice was tinged with embarrassment. "I followed them. Jenkins went in the garage, and Jim came down here. I came after him. It was perfectly foolish of me. Then I saw him go up the other stairs with some one who must have been waiting down here. I peeped out of the door, saw you under the trees, thought you were one of them, dodged back—"

"And I dropped in on you," Bliss concluded. "How long was I under your ministrations?"

"Hours," she replied despairingly. "I had two matches, and one went out. Then I struck the other, and saw who you were. I fixed your head, and then you came to."

"How are we going to get out and find them?" he asked. "Are the doors locked?"

"Yes; but there must be a window or something."

"We'll have to explore. Have you a match?"

"I had two—but I used them. Have

you none?" Her tone was a bit scornful. "I thought men carried matches."

"Do they?" he asked, perhaps a little plaintively.

His head had begun to throb like the crescendo of an approaching locomotive, and at the tone of his voice she gave a little sympathetic cry and caught at his arm.

"Does your head hurt?" she begged.

"For an ordinary head—yes," he admitted. "Though it's not bad for a head that has argued with the floor."

"You glanced. It's all scraped," she lucidly explained. "If I had a light, I could bandage it."

"There must be electric lights," he suggested, not averse to being bandaged. "We'll find them."

But he was first to find other things. There was, for instance, the coal bin. Bliss discovered that with his head, and at the same time discovered how sweet are the uses of profanity. From across the cellar came the girl's call of sympathy.

"It's nothing," he assured her, "but the furnace is right here, and there must be a light near the furnace."

He began swinging his arms, hoping to strike the cord by which the light was probably suspended. He did, but with a little too much vigor. It was as if the garage had been dynamited about their ears. The electric globe had swung against the furnace and exploded.

The girl shrieked, Bliss bit himself, and then the girl exclaimed:

"Oh, I've found a light!" Then she added hopelessly: "But it won't light!"

"Bother!" said Bliss.

The girl giggled, then suggested:

"Let's find the coal bins and get out by the coal chute."

"That's right," Bliss agreed. "The coal bin is over here. I found it once—with my head."

He stepped confidently forward, and tripped over something that clattered

wetly across the floor. The girl tardily warned:

"Oh, that's the tin cup I got water for your head in."

"That's all right," he assured her. "I'm used to falling now." And they both giggled.

Then, spurred by fear of what Jenkins and the others might be accomplishing outside, he fumbled ahead on his way.

Eventually they found the bin, and, while Bliss sought a way out, the coal dust picked out a wet pattern on his face, hands, and clothes in delightfully whimsical style. But the coal chute, he discovered, ran down through the garage floor, and was bolted from above. Bliss gave up.

"We're wasting time," he decided. "Let's pick the lock."

"Do you know how to pick locks?" she asked, in awe. "I have a hairpin. Isn't that what they always do it with?"

"Who does what?"

"People pick locks—on the spur of the moment, this way."

"They say it's easy," Bliss explained. "Give me the hairpin."

She obeyed, and followed him up the stairs to the door. He thrust the pin into the vitals of the lock and tortured the thing for five minutes, without success. The girl was just a step below, and he could feel the warmth of her. He caught himself wondering whether the moon had come through the clouds. But that accursed lock would not yield.

"Whew!" He drew his coat sleeve across his brow, which helped the mural decorations of water and coal dust and blood. "I give up!"

"Can't you pick it?"

"I might—with a pickax. This lock would be worth a fortune on a burglar-proof safe."

She pressed up on the narrow step beside him.

"Let me try it." Her voice was just

at his ear. "I might have better luck—not that I ever picked a lock before."

Seeking the hairpin, her groping fingers found his. Bliss could have sworn that they lingered in the most fleeting of caresses. It was the culmination of a full, full day—that flood of tingling joy that poured from her fingers up his arm and down to his vitals in a riotous roundelay of capture and possession. He withstood the impulse, and drew aside while she bent above the lock.

And then, of a sudden, she cried: "Oh, there goes the pin!" And Bliss felt something drop beside his feet.

He stooped to get it. So did she. They became entangled there on the narrow stair, and, as they rose, breathless, her soft hair brushed his face. Instinctively, he kissed it.

The kiss was audible, Bliss being a novice at kissing.

She heard, and stopped very still. He could almost see her standing rigid beside him. Hot waves and cold swept him. Her silence seemed to speak volumes. He sensed an expectant something in her attitude. She was waiting, he decided, for him to do something.

So he did it.

After a little, when she was free to meditate, she meditated:

"What a joke on me, that I must get a man into a dark cellar to get myself proposed to!"

Proposed to? Bliss felt qualms. That was undoubtedly what she had said, and he had merely—well, he blushed to think what he had merely done. And then there surged over him the feeling of a captive. He brushed past her, broke down the door with one thrust of his braced shoulder, and together they emerged.

Bliss noticed at once that the moon had come through the clouds.

For a moment after they had burst forth from the cellar, the two stood looking irresolutely about them, the girl thrusting her tumbled hair into place

with deft fingers. Then a chuckle rippled from her curving lips down the soft lines of her body to her feet.

"Have you forgiven me for making you carry me across the meadows?" she inquired laughingly.

Her attitude, Bliss thought, was again expectant, and, in spite of himself, he came up to expectations; at which she seemed content, and remembered their mission.

"I just know Jenkins has gone to Percy's room!" she exclaimed.

"Percy's? Why—"

"I'll explain later," she promised briskly, and by the swift energy of her tone Bliss was borne into confused obedience. "Come! You can see in his window from an elm outside. Come!"

He tried, as he followed her, to revive his old distrust of her. He had coupled her with Jenkins in his suspicions. Might she not be duping him now? His cheeks hot with memory of what had passed upon the cellar stair, his very self-respect told him that she could not be a thief. But Bliss hated to surrender. When she had led him to the foot of the elm, and pointed upward, he whispered:

"Where are you going?"

"I can't very well climb the tree," she reminded him. "Not with spectators, anyway."

Bliss climbed, quietly as a ghost, till he could look in through Percy's unshaded window. Up to that minute, his suspicions of the girl had clung to life, but at what he saw they swiftly and painlessly died, and he knew that the mystery of the necklace was near the end of its course. For Percy sat near the window, in his right hand an automatic pistol and in his left a flat white box that must contain the necklace; while facing him and the pistol stood two men—Jenkins and another. Bliss saw that they were pleading or threatening; saw that Percy was denying their appeal; and saw, without under-

standing, that the man with Jenkins was moving sidewise, a little at a time, toward a stand that supported a heavy unlighted lamp.

The argument in the room grew heated. Jenkins gesticulated, Percy made a sharp reply, and then the other figure wheeled like a flash and caught up the lamp, awkwardly, in both hands. Bliss' warning cry was drowned by the stuttering discharge of Percy's pistol before the lamp crashed against his head and he toppled forward in his chair. Jenkins wavered to the floor, while the smaller figure that had hurled the lamp snatched the precious white box from Percy's hand and leaped, apparently, straight through the window. The next instant, Bliss was crashing from branch to branch, falling, jumping—anything to get to the ground.

As he landed, tumult arose in the shadow beneath the window. He raced that way, and the voice that greeted him was the voice of the maid, Smith:

"Two of them! Watch them! I've a revolver! Shoot, if you have to!" She was so brisk and resolute that, even in that moment, he thrilled with pride at her. He launched himself into the darkness toward her voice, felt the jar of a fist, and the next moment had a soft throat beneath his fingers and worried it till his antagonist crumpled and collapsed. Turning, he saw two other figures in a puny struggle, and gathered them both into the grip of his arms. One—it was Smith—cried:

"All right, I've got the necklace! Hold her!" And, as Bliss released her, he saw that his remaining captive was a girl, though garbed as a man. Then came Kearns, and many others, to his aid.

It was not till morning that they rounded up the tangled ends. Their captives were three—Jenkins, with a bullet in his shoulder; the man called Jim, who had waited beneath the window; and the girl—it was she who had

thrown the lamp—slender and pretty, yet with a hard calculation in her eye. They were held overnight in the custody of Kearns, but in the morning Mr. Murray summoned the detective.

"I'll tell you," he explained. "We've got the necklace, and court business is foolishness. Better just let the three of them go."

Kearns protested, but that Mr. Murray should have his way was inevitable. It was his necklace and his grievance, and if he proposed to drop the matter, that was his affair. But the disconsolate Kearns confided in Bliss, and left that young man more deeply puzzled than ever. It was not, he felt sure, characteristic of Mr. Murray to forgive an injury. He was still wondering when the detectable lady's maid came down the path from the house, wearing hat and jacket, a suit case in one hand and a parasol in the other.

"What—" Bliss began, in some amazement. "Wha—"

"I've resigned," she explained, chuckling. "I've—quit."

"Why—why, so have I, then," he promptly decided, and with an assurance to which, two days before, he would have thought himself a stranger, he took her suit case from her hand.

She laughed aloud.

"Aren't you going to tell Mr. Murray you're going—funny man?"

He shook his head.

"I didn't ask for the position. I never formally accepted it. When he discovers I have departed, he will, no doubt, infer my resignation. Where are you going?"

"To the station," she admitted, dimpling. "Let's walk. I know a path through the woods."

And so they set off, she jabbing with her parasol at the flowers along their way. The trees were just in full leaf; the world was alive and a-tingle. Bliss knew that he was deliciously happy, knew that he was trembling with some



"Jo," he announced severely, "I've three questions to ask you. Promise to answer?"

strange emotion, knew that there was something he should do—but knew not what.

Their path lay across the meadow and through those pines from which he had watched her rendezvous, and where his nasal explosion had betrayed him. Among the pines, she paused, turned to smile at him, wrinkled her delightful nose, and sneezed. He grinned in uneasy realization that there was something, he knew not what, that he should do. She waited, eyed him questioningly, and sneezed again. Then suddenly he knew, for he had always been quick to learn. The trees sheltered them from view on every side.

By and by, they collected the suit case and parasol and proceeded. Emerging from the pines, he remembered his previous visit to the spot, and asked:

"Who was it you met here last night?"

"Green-eyed! Green-eyed!" she chanted. "Jealous old thing!"

"Who was it?" he stubbornly insisted.

She countered:

"You're a regular question box. Tell me—are you really just a chauffeur?"

"Of course not," reprovingly. "My name is Bliss—F. Johnson Bliss. 'F.' is for Frank. My home is in New York. I am an author."

"Oh, goody! Are you?" She clapped her hands. "What have you written?"

He flushed faintly.

"I'm just in training," he admitted. "I'm a reporter at present. I started reporting to learn how to write——"

"Golly! Are you a reporter, too?" Then, dimpling: "Well, I—I'm married!"

He turned faintly pale.

"Who——"

"I'm just in training," she teased, mimicking him. "I started being engaged to learn how to be married." Then, while he recovered breath and color, "When did you first love me?" she inquired, without relevance. She pursed her lips over the question, and once again that suit case bit the dust.

"When I found there was nothing wrong with that tire," he replied, when it was convenient.

"I was sure," she decided, "as soon as you didn't give me away."

"Why did you keep Mrs. Murray sitting in the sun that way?"

She became serious.

"So that Barton—Janet Barton, the maid who got hit on the head—could search the boudoir. Janet is a detective."

"Did she find the necklace?"

"Yes; but just as she found it, Percy came in and hit her with something and took it."

"Percy? But he fought them off last night!"

"I know. He didn't take it in the beginning. But he took it from Barton. He thought she didn't see him. She saw him in a mirror, as he hit her from behind."

"What a——"

"Oh, he wasn't to blame. Jenkins and the others were after him."

"How? Why? He didn't need the money."

"Barton told me. Her agency traced Percy back. That girl we caught last night—Percy had married her, actually, at Princeton."

"The idiot! Think of marrying any one but you!"

"It was such a fool thing as boys do," she said gently. "But afterward he was sick and sorry and afraid of what his father would do."

"She wasn't nice to look at," Bliss remarked.

"She was worse than she looked," Jo snapped, with the bitterness of women toward an erring sister. "Jim was her brother. She was a little sneak, and Jim was a thief, and they wanted to get Percy into their class."

"Jenkins—what about him?"

"He was a friend of Jim's. They all three came here, and they hung to

Percy like leeches. They wanted the necklace, but he wouldn't steal it."

"But he did, in the end."

"No, no! He didn't take it! But when it was stolen, and the newspapers printed the story, Jenkins and the others thought Percy had done it. He denied it, and they threatened to come and tell his father about his marriage if he didn't give it to them."

"But how do you know all this——"

She laughed.

"Some of it Janet told me, some I guessed—and the rest I heard, listening from that elm outside Percy's window when Jenkins was up in his room one night."

"And when he did get the thing, why didn't he give it to them?"

"They came to get it last night. Percy is a decent boy, and he was afraid Kearns suspected him. He wouldn't give it to them."

"And we saw the rest—and you caught the girl yourself! You're remarkably brave, are you not?"

"Do you think so?"

They halted while he gave her assurances of his esteem, assurances that she received with frank delight.

"So that's all settled," she laughed at last. "And now we're both out of a job. Can you—support us?" Her eyes were twinkling.

"I think we'll manage," he said seriously. "My father is 'W. K.'"

"W. K. Bliss?" Her tone was dim with awe. "Glory be to goodness, Sue, look what you've done! The Bliss Biscuits man?"

He nodded.

"But is Susan your name?"

"Uh-huh!"

"I like 'Jo' better."

She cried, with pretended fierceness: "You must just always love Jo best of all!" Then, with mock humility, half to herself: "Bliss Biscuits! Susan Bradlee, you've gone and hooked a catch!"

They emerged from the woodland and approached the station, and Bliss left her with the suit case while he undertook to purchase tickets. When he returned, his face was crimson.

"Jo, I haven't a cent! I've lost my bill book!"

She laughed joyously.

"Oh, you millionaire!" she taunted. "I thought you were rich!" Then, with a pretty pretense of business, she loaned him the money for their tickets. The train would not be along for half an hour. They established squatter sovereignty over a baggage truck. And Bliss, meditating upon the past twenty-four hours, discovering within himself a new confidence, turned at last to the girl.

"Jo," he announced severely, "I've three questions to ask you. Promise to answer?"

Ever so meekly she nodded.

"Yes, sir."

"Who are you, Jo?" That was his first. "You—aren't a bit like a real lady's maid, you know."

She giggled shamefully.

"It's an awful joke on me, Frank," she told him. "Once upon a time, there was a girl who didn't want to come out. Her mamma and her papa wanted her to make a good match, and she wouldn't, and she fought and kicked and screamed till they let her have her way; and she got a job on a newspaper—as a reporter—and made good. And she was so tickled with herself! And then she—she was a Beacon Street Bradlee, Frank—she fell in love with a man, and decided to marry him, and then found out that, after all her dodging, she had gone and hooked a catch." She hesitated, in faint embarrassment. "And that's me, Frank," she admitted.

It was too much for him, and he chewed it for a while.

"Well, how extraordinary!" he murmured at length. "And so your paper sent you out here—just as mine sent me!"

"I thought the game was up last night, when you caught me giving my report to the man my paper sent out to get it. That was why I was so anxious to throw you off the track."

"You certainly succeeded! And to think of your ferreting out all the details! Do you know who stole that necklace in the beginning, before Percy?"

"Gracious! I should think you'd see that!" she exclaimed. "There are folks, you know, who think getting into society and getting into the papers are the same thing; and, outside of murders and divorces—and they're mussy—jewels will get you into the papers quicker than anything else, especially if they're stolen. Mrs. Murray, Frank—she hid the necklace, then said it was stolen. It almost killed her when it really did disappear from where she had hidden it." She eyed him with shy foreknowledge. "What's your third question, Frank?"

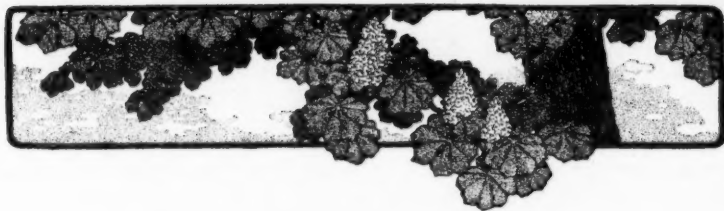
"Third?" he repeated, and instantly forgot his surprise at Mrs. Murray's exploit. "Third? Oh, just this, Jo: When will you marry me?"

She drew away.

"By advice of counsel," she replied, "I refuse to answer. Being engaged's such fun, I want to do it for a while." Then, at his woeful face: "But not for long, Frank."

The station platform was deserted; none could observe them, and her attitude, he saw, was again expectant.





Vagabond Song

By Martha Haskell Clark

NORTH and south and east and west call the gypsy trails
Through the sudden mist of April rain,
And the night wind in the hollow, it beckons me to follow,
With pine-tipped fingers points the road again.

Here a penny, there a penny
Buys a crust of bread;
Here to-day, and there to-morrow,
Where I make my bed,
Forest leaves beneath me
And the starlight overhead.

Far across the waiting world fares the gypsy train
Through the mist-filled shades of coming night;
And beyond the distant turning, where the sunset still is burning,
The gypsy camp fires set the dark alight.

Up the hill, and down the hill,
Through the sleeping towns,
By the sweetfern-bordered track
That leads across the downs;
Past the vagrant camp fires,
With their pale-blue smoke upcurled,
Fare the open wander trails
That lead across the world.



When We Talk It Over

PERHAPS you have heard of Dana

Burnet, or, better still, have read some of his work. He writes poetry, articles, stories—and all of his work possesses a charm, a delicacy, a distinction hard to describe, but very easy to feel and appreciate. He has written his first long novel—an unusual, and, in some ways, a wonderful story. Some time this year it will appear as a book, and attract a great deal of attention. But you will first have the opportunity of reading it in SMITH'S.

NO, it isn't a serial. We will publish it in two numbers of the magazine, so that you will have the whole story in a little over a month. It is called "The Shining Adventure." It starts out as the tale of a lonely little boy in a big, old-fashioned house in Gramercy Park. He is well cared for in many ways, but in some others—just as important to a child as the things that adults lay so much stress on—he is rather neglected. There are no other children to play with, and no real adventures. He starts off on a really great Adventure on the same day his nurse has selected for her elopement. Consequently, he gets farther away, and has a more wonderful time, than might have been possible save for this coincidence. The nursemaid's elopement pales into insignificance beside the really shining, magnificent adventure of the little boy. It takes him east from Gramercy Park, to a place where there are a great number of children, not at all well dressed, and of strange manners. Then the tale broadens into a humorous story of city politics, of adult characters and adult emotions. A strong, interesting tale, but with the golden thread of the child's adventure running through the fabric of the nar-

rative. We think we are safe in saying that no magazine will publish anything so charming in a long time. In the next two issues of SMITH'S.

ARE you one of the women who like dogs, or do you prefer cats? If you are a little afraid of dogs, if you think they are a nuisance, if you find it simply impossible to understand what some people see in them, read the story by Marie Manning in the next issue of the magazine. It is about a dog and a boy; and you know the sort of story that Marie Manning can write.

THERE are a good many notable things in the next issue of the magazine, but one of the most arresting is the story called "Her Husband's Freedom," by Helen E. Haskell. The author has drawn two most interesting characters in the woman of intellect and the woman of instinct, who are pitted against each other. The former does not know that her husband is out of love with her until the latter warns her. If she had been a trifle more the gentle, yielding, instinctive type of woman, she could have held the man. As it was, she magnetized the field in which Anne Stillwell struck the spark. Don't miss this unusual story.

THE next number will also bring another big installment of Mrs. Martin's serial, which is growing in interest; a charming story, by Anne O'Hagan, about an artist whose life itself was his greatest work; a clever love story, by Margaret Busbee Shipp, of a little school-teacher who outwitted a veteran matchmaker; and Doctor Whitney's splendid article. These are only a few of the good things coming in the June number of SMITH'S.

Dandruff—Falling Hair—Baldness

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

THAT condition of baldness which is not dependent upon *old age*—is there a remedy for it? Before proceeding to answer, we should go back over many papers that have antedated this, and discuss old age; there we will really find an answer, strange as this may seem.

Old age, as we understand the term, is applicable to the incapacitated, the decrepit, and all those who are completely out of the running, no matter what their years. It does not relate to those who are "still young at three-score years and ten," for these fortunate ones are not old; they are of *no* age. They are still in the vanguard with the young folk, so they still possess youthful attributes. And one outward evidence of their continued virility is a goodly head of hair, or at least some hair upon the scalp, enough to make quite a showing.

Time was, not so very long ago, when the hair and its troubles occupied the attention of the barber and the hairdresser only. Physicians regarded it as beneath their dignity to prescribe hair oils and tonics. To be sure, skin specialists have always treated diseases of the scalp, but they placed baldness and its accompanying evils on the same plane with corns and bunions. Happily, these also are now receiving legitimate medical treatment.

Two things have given an impetus to the scientific study of the hair: first, the ever-increasing prevalence of hair troubles—falling hair, dandruff, baldness; and, second, our ever-increasing knowledge of the wonders performed by healthy, active, ductless glands. Yes, the ductless glands again!

The more scientists learn about these marvelous little organs, the more clearly do we appreciate the relationship between them and such outward evidences of virility as abundant hair. Every one knows from personal acquaintance with men possessed either of remarkably preserved hair on the scalp or of luxuriantly grown beards that their mental and physical powers are equally well preserved, yet it has given rise to no speculation as to the bearing that these facts have upon one another.

It has been pointed out many times in these papers that premature old age, with its attendant symptoms, is caused by alterations in the ductless glands, especially the thyroid. It is well known that interference with the secretions of this gland affects the skin and hair. Now, those who have little hair, or who shed their hair early in life, are usually of spare habit, and it is supposed that in them the thyroid gland has not been as active as it might be. There are, of course, many ac-

quired conditions giving rise to loss of hair, notably such habits of life as are a tremendous strain upon the vital processes. And this brings us back to the aforesaid assertion that bodily vigor in old age is dependent on the preservation of our physical powers, and that in this state the hair is usually maintained in a high degree of beautiful vitality. Working up from these facts, scientists now believe that premature decay of the hair—that is to say, partial and complete baldness, for which no usual cause can be found and no external treatment avails—is due to some derangement of this remarkably important gland.

In women, a luxuriant growth of hair upon the scalp, with well-defined eyebrows and lashes, constitutes a great attraction. While men are not so dependent upon hirsute adornment, yet its lack is regarded by some as an affliction, and is generally conceded as deplorable, especially when accompanied by dandruff.

Children, both boys and girls, often owe their sole claim to beauty to a wealth of hair. The startling alteration in the appearance of a boy when age demands that his locks be shorn usually brings tears to the eyes of his mother as she suddenly finds her baby gone, while in his place stands an aggressive little male. He himself doesn't give a fig about his hair or its appearance. *Now* he will no longer be taunted with the sobriquet "boy girl"; *now* he has some genuine claims to masculinity. He and his grown-up brother have no foolish Samsonian notions connecting bodily strength and vitality with hairy development upon the head. But, strange to say, this is another antiquated belief recently resurrected by science, and bodily vigor is really indicated by the hair. Eunuchs never grow bald. Emasculated women develop hair upon the face. Also, it is an interesting fact that

women rarely, in the course of a long, well-regulated life, lose all of their hair. They live longer than men, too, as pointed out by Metchnikoff.

We could go on far beyond the length of this paper discussing so fascinating a subject. Here we can simply call attention to the latest theory in explanation of baldness that has resisted previous methods of treatment, and suggest a possible new remedy.

Senile baldness is not a condition to be dealt with here, as it is questionable whether any degree of activity in the hair follicles can ever be aroused in cases of true senility. Rejuvenation can and does occur in premature senility; of that there no longer remains a doubt. But when hair begins to grow upon the head of men who for years have been debilitated, and who, through right living—systematic exercise and the like—renew their youth, it is because of this, and not because of any *local scalp* treatment, that the miracle occurs.

Cases of congenital baldness sometimes occur; that is, cases in which there is absolutely no hairy development from birth on. The disadvantages of this condition, especially in girls, are too numerous to mention. In such cases, every phase of the child's life must be studied; the blood should be counted, the thyroid gland should be treated, and, as the chief ingredient in the secretion of this gland is iodine, the sirup of iodide of iron should be given over a long course of time. This, with other hygienic remedies—air, sunlight, out-of-door exercise, and so forth—is also good treatment for all cases of thin and scanty hair in the young.

The hair is influenced in its growth, quality, and permanence by various conditions of a general character. For instance, scanty development "runs" in some families. The young men begin

to loose their hair at an early age, very often between seventeen and twenty-five. Again, it is characteristic in some families for the hair to grow very high on the temples, so that the girls must hide this in various ingenious ways, while the boys soon grow bald. Any intercurrent disease, anything that alters the blood supply to the scalp, any factor that robs the hair of proper nourishment, immediately interferes with it, and the hair begins to fall out.

Uncleanliness of the scalp, due to greasiness and oversweating, which blocks the follicles with all sorts of dried secretions harboring millions of microbes, is a frequent cause of loss of hair. This is a form of dandruff. There are other forms, dry in nature, supposedly due to tightness of the scalp and to pressure on the end arteries, choking off the blood supply. This variety often occurs in men as a result of the hats they wear.

The medical profession is divided as to the cause of dandruff being microbic. The highest authority, Professor Sabourand, of Paris, is of this opinion. He has found a certain microbe dwelling in enormous numbers in the mouths of hair follicles in healthy as well as diseased scalps.

Loss of hair and patchy baldness is often caused by ringworm, which is highly contagious, but which is hard for the inexperienced to detect. It is,

therefore, of the utmost importance that every one should possess and use his own hairbrushes and combs, that these be kept scrupulously clean, and that children be taught the reasons for, and the value of, such practices. Children, by the way—even infants—may have dandruff. It need never develop if the scalp is properly cared for.

In those cases of loss of hair, with impending baldness, that are accom-

panied by dandruff, it is safe to say that the latter causes the former. At any rate, dandruff, whenever it exists, should be vigorously treated and got rid of, even when the hair grows luxuriantly, for it is bound to affect it sooner or later. Then, what is more unpleasant than evidences of dandruff, especially when it falls in powdery flakes upon the shoulders, or breaks out in the eyebrows or on the face, as it sometimes does?

There are three drugs used with excellent results in this trouble. These are sulphur, salicylic acid, and resorcin. But no amount of treatment directed toward the removal of dandruff will be effectual if methods of washing the scalp are not revolutionized. Alkaline shampooing with borax and the like is now unqualifiedly condemned. The following wash for dandruff, given by a leading authority, and of especial value to women with long hair, consists of:



Checkmate loss of hair as soon as discovered.



Briskly rub all treatment into the scalp.

Spirit of ether	1,000 parts
Tincture of benzoin	100 parts
Vanillin	1 part
Heliotropin	3 parts
Geranium oil	2 parts

Pour a tablespoonful on the head once a day and rub in with a fine cloth. Keep away from the fire.

This wash imparts a delightful odor to the hair. It is especially recommended for oily, greasy scalps, and has the further distinction of improving the condition of the hair, instead of ruining it.

Borax, ammonia, and other alkalines, are used for their drying effects. True, they accomplish this, but at the expense of the hair, as they dry out the oily glands of the scalp so effectually that a dry, scaly, or flaky variety of dandruff is often produced. Indeed, many authorities believe that dandruff is only too frequently the result of harmful shampooing. Too frequent washing of the hair is also condemned for

the same reason; oils and clean hair-brushes are the best cleansers.

Of course, there is no objection to the occasional use of pure soap and water, but it has been demonstrated that a very small quantity of oil—in case of dandruff, medicated with one or another of the drugs mentioned above—rubbed briskly into the *scalp*—not hair—every day, until it is absorbed, followed by a vigorous brushing of the hair, preserves a beautiful head of hair; that it stimulates the growth of the hair and vastly improves it in a short time; that it prevents the occurrence of dandruff; and, lastly, that it cures many cases of this trouble. So simple a mode of treatment is, therefore, very well worth while, is it not?

Every oily preparation should be applied to the scalp with a medicine dropper, if it is a liquid. If it is an ointment, the thinnest of layers, no heavier than paper, should be removed from the jar by the finger tip, conveyed to the scalp, and there applied, with brisk rubbing. Any excess that has reached the hair should be removed with a soft cloth before the brushing begins. With these precautions always observed, the hair itself remains as dry as a bone, and becomes as glossy as a raven's wing.

Resorcin discolours the hair. It is an excellent drug for dark hair, especially when it is becoming gray, as it has a tendency to restore it; but the greatest precaution is necessary when it is used on other shades, as it has a tendency to make blond hair white and gray hair reddish, if it is used too long, especially in summer. Therefore, it should be restricted to winter use, and to a period of not over two or three weeks, an interval of the same length being allowed to elapse before the treatment is resumed. It is so efficient, however, that it should be employed, but with care. Sulphur and salicylic acid are

more successful in some cases. It is claimed that sulphur also restores color to the hair, but it has the opposite effect at times. A sulphur ointment is highly extolled for impending baldness due to dandruff.

Loss of hair, besides being caused by dandruff, is often due to nervous conditions, particularly in women, who are far more emotional than men. Seasonal variations in the fall of hair is quite common, especially in the autumn. Women often ask what degree of rapidity determines the fact that they are actually losing hair, and it is safe to say that if three dozen hairs fall out at each combing, loss of hair has begun.

What should then be done? Of course, it goes without saying that the general health must be looked after while the health of the hair is being cared for. The best local treatment is vigorous daily massage of the scalp with the following:

QUININE HAIR TONIC FOR FALLING HAIR.

Quinine sulphate	½ dram
Chloral hydrate	½ dram
Camphor	½ dram
Oil of cajuput	1 dram
Oil of bay	1 dram
Alcohol enough to make	8 ounces

Rub the camphor and alcohol together, dissolve the quinine in the alcohol, add the oils, and mix all together. Apply a small quantity to the scalp as directed.

By these measures, falling hair, when due to dandruff and not to constitutional disorders, can in most instances be checked.

What of a well-defined condition of baldness? Doubtless no amount of local treatment will restore the hair upon a chronically bald pate, although fortunes have been spent upon this endeavor. Now that scientists have shed some light on the causes that produce this effect in selected cases, we will probably hear of cures, should any one

be sufficiently strong-minded to overthrow the habits of a lifetime and regulate himself in every particular in accordance with nature's laws. But while the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak—and a toupee is probably the easiest way!

Could any treatment be instituted with a hope of success? It is always expedient to give every one and everything the benefit of a doubt. In some instances, therefore, the hair follicles can be reawakened from a dormant state by *penetrating heat and light rays*. Some specialists claim to get results by means of the Finsen rays, X-rays, ultra-violet rays, high-frequency currents, or the actinic-light rays applied by the Kromayer lamp. Others say that these are all of doubtful value. All heat and light rays come from the sun, and experiments have proven that a life lived out of doors, in the hills or mountains, without any covering on the head, exposing the scalp to direct sunlight, encourages the hair to renewed growth. Of course, it must be remembered that such a life is free from all contaminating influences, and that the entire system is given an opportunity to reconstruct itself.

The local application of blistering agents is sometimes heroically resorted to, in the hope of inducing hair to grow upon a chronically bald scalp. Sharp stimulation by means of tincture of cantharides and other agents of this character are sometimes effectual. The following is prescribed by a well-known authority:

Carbonate of potash	1 dram
Water of ammonia	6 drams
Tincture of cantharides	2 drams
Oil of nutmeg	12 drops
Cologne enough to make	½ pint

Mix, and apply to the scalp daily.

NOTE: Appropriate formulæ containing resorcin, sulphur, and so forth,

will be forwarded to applicants upon compliance with the rules of this department.

Answers to Queries

MRS. C.—You are quite right. As soon as the waist begins to thicken, the figure becomes mature. You should do a great deal of walking. To get the full benefit, walk with the head held erect, chest high, abdomen drawn in, and shoulder blades thrown back. Wear loose clothing, so that deep breathing is unhampered, and comfortable walking boots, so that you won't grow corns. A daily tramp of a few miles, rain or shine, will insure you a slim waist, beside many other evidences of beauty and health.

BEN BOLT.—One cannot lay down hard-and-fast rules on this point. Some require more sleep than others. Napoleon did with four hours. He had the astonishing faculty of closing his mind to the stupendous affairs that burdened him and snatching a few minutes of refreshing sleep whenever he cared to do so. From six to eight hours should be sufficient for a healthy adult; children and old people need more—the young for growth, the old for recuperation.

SARAH.—Yes, face creams do have a tendency to enlarge the pores, but not to the extent that the injudicious use of powder does. Therefore, it is wise to use an astringent wash of some sort after the cream and before powdering. Many women spray the face with toilet water or toilet vinegar for this purpose. Too much borax and too much benzoin make the skin dry and yellow.

MANDY.—The little blisters you mention are usually due to slight disorders of the digestion. They appear periodically in some cases. An application of camphor ice, or spirit of niter, will abort them. When well advanced, they become painful, and need carbolized-zinc ointment to heal them. Regulate your habits in accordance with hygienic measures. *Rules of Health* to guide you will be sent on request.

BACHELOR GIRL.—Full directions for treatment of *enlarged* pores will be sent to you on receipt of a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

TEXAS.—You should leave no stone unturned for the cure of an offensive breath. An article on this subject that created wide-

spread interest appeared in this department in December, 1914. I strongly advise you to read it. Meanwhile use the following:

Chlorate of potash 30 grains.
Tincture of myrrh 10 drops.
Elixir of calisaya 3 ounces.

Mix. Dilute one tablespoonful with two of water, and use as a mouth and throat gargle.

WORRIED.—A lotion for chronic freckles consists of:

Corrosive sublimate 2 grains
Lemon juice 1 ounce
Rose water 4 ounces
Powdered borax ½ dram

Apply with a camel's-hair brush, or absorbent cotton, once or twice a day. Label "Poison," and keep out of harm's way. If this irritates the skin, apply a bland cold cream.

MISS H.—The following makes a harmless lotion for freckles:

Rose water 6 ounces
Glycerin ½ ounce
Bitter-almond water 2½ drams
Tincture of benzoin 2½ drams
Borax 1½ drams

Rub the borax up with the glycerin, gradually adding the rose and almond waters, lastly the tincture of benzoin, agitating the mixture all the time. Apply night and morning with absorbent cotton, allowing the lotion to dry on. You will require stronger measures for chronic forms. If you desire more detailed advice on freckles, tan, and the like, send self-addressed, stamped envelope.

A. L. F.—The following delightful lip salve is astringent; by the daily use of it you may reduce your lips. The salve is harmless. It makes an ideal remedy for chapped lips:

Paraffin wax 2 av. oz.
White petrolatum 4 av. oz.
Alkanet root 1 dram
Camphor 1 dram
Menthol 1 dram
Eucalyptol 15 drops
Oil of bitter almond 4 drops
Oil of clove 2 drops
Oil of cassia 1 drop

Digest the root in the melted paraffin and petrolatum, strain, add the other ingredients, stir well, and put in a jar.

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.



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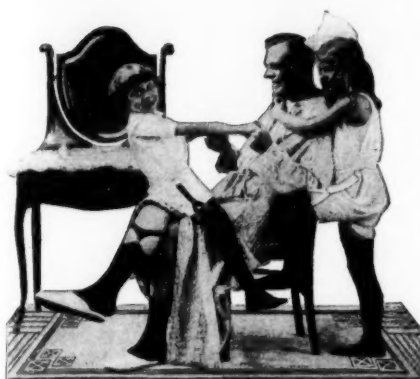
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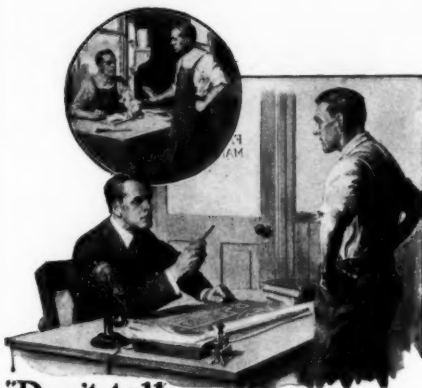
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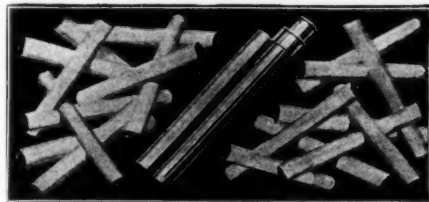
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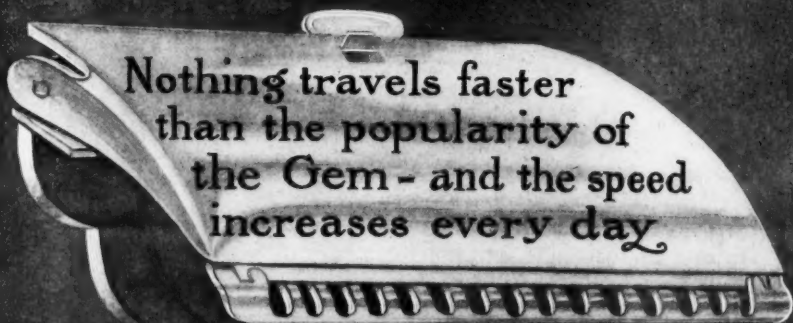
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